

This Old House

33
DIY TIPS
to save you
time & money
P. 80

Reader Makeover Special!

4 paint projects

3 outdoor
redos

3 kitchen
upgrades

2 bath updates

*Plus: How to do
it on time &
under budget*



PHOTO © JEFFREY M. HARRIS
THISOLDHOUSE.COM

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READER ISSUE



Look for this symbol
throughout the issue
to highlight projects,
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that TCH readers

our reader reimodel contest

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WINNERS



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Cover Photo by JESSICA CRADOCK
Styling by LINDA CRADOCK



Test your **E.I.Q.** (Energy Independence Quotient)

How can propane help make your remodeling dreams a reality?



- A. Provides Federal tax credits
- B. Offers potential state incentives
- C. Reduces your carbon footprint
- D. All of the above

Answer: **D. All of the above**

Did you know?

- **Propane is economical.** If you install energy efficient technologies, like a propane tankless water heater or a high-efficiency propane furnace, in your home before the end of 2010 you can earn a 30% Federal tax credit (up to \$1500). Many states are offering additional rebates and tax incentives to reward consumers for efficiency improvements.
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- **Propane is clean.** Propane gives off less than half the greenhouse emissions of electricity, considering that over half the electricity is produced at coal fired power plants.
- **Propane is here.** More than 95% of the US propane supply, used by 60 million Americans, is produced in North America.

There has never been a better time to upgrade your appliances to high-efficiency propane. Federal tax credits and state incentives deliver significant savings now. Over time, as you use your propane appliances, you'll realize measurable energy cost savings. And you'll reduce your carbon footprint, too.

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www.usapropane.com

Test your E.I.Q. and learn more at thiselhouse.com/energy



The right energy can make the outdoors the most comfortable room in the house.

Everyone knows that cooking with propane grills is a patio tradition. But these days, people are using propane — and propane — for a lot more than grilling. Propane is efficiently fueling a whole world of outdoor living options. From outdoor fireplaces and kitchens to space heaters to bug eliminators to pool and spa heaters. Plus, propane gives off less than half the greenhouse gas emissions of electricity. To learn more about how clean, reliable propane is enhancing outdoor living today, visit usapropane.com.



PROPANE
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY™



54
HOME CENTER
CLASSIC



19
HYDRANGEA
SOLUTIONS

91
AFTER THIS
GOLD HOUSE

[illegible]

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MOEN

For the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

A vacuum with wheels makes you go back and forth.

Vacuums still have wheels that make it hard work to move around objects and unnecessarily difficult to vacuum in corners.

A ball just turns.

dyson ball

No more awkward turns.



PHOTO: © WHEELS.COM

www.dyson.com

I hope you're proud of yourselves

I regret only 10: To a guy like me, you people are superheroes. You are Underdog by a long way. I should get you something—a shirt maybe. One like mine could be good.

Quite seriously, though, I am humbled by how many of you came to my defense when I wrote about Williams a couple of weeks ago. You remember Williams—the contractor who had no hole respect for me and the DIY crowd? I wish that he wanted me to take early retirement!

Leslie Soares stood up, indignant, and wrote that she appreciated my confessions, “the catwaddlers,” she called it, “that comes with helping out another through our accomplishments as well as mistakes.” Anne and Allen Rosen was a letter saying that, rather than retiring, I should get a retirement party thrown in my honor. Jan Waldron put a few lines on us for the way of us. Co-Director of the event my wife and me to go bowling with her and her husband And Adams and Eve (“Yes, those are correct names.”) Judy, Vince (“No Playboys! Please! This Old House.”) Addams, Diane (“I work full-time, have two teenage boys, and my husband doesn’t really know where our property starts or ends.”) Blaise, and dozens more of you had similar things to say. And then there was this, from Jessica Aberschlag:

“We’re human just like the rest of us.”

Well, maybe, Jessica. I guess, on my best days, I may be fairly human. But I can only hope to be something even closer to like the rest of you—especially those who sat on projects to feature in this second annual Reader-Created Issue of *This Old House*.

After all, my pension has not won me \$1,000 in a remodel (see page 64). I am not smart enough to spend only \$645 on a kitchen redo (p. 37). Unlike 33 of you, I have never come up with a publishable success saving up (p. 80). And I’ve never even finished a remodel, let alone finished a remodel from my hospital bed (p. 78).

So what I’m saying? You people have special powers. Lots of you. Every single page of this issue features achievements and inspiration from other *TOW* readers: outstanding kitchens, remarkable outdoor spaces, and bedrooms, both, and exterior makeovers that anyone would be proud of. Which is why you’ll find loads more impressive reader makeovers than can possibly fit in this issue at thisoldhouse.com/yearTOWH. So now it’s my turn to cheer you on. Keep up the good work!

Scott Ombelassin
SCOTT OMBELASSIN
EDITOR



THERE'S NO NEED TO FEAR... THE TOW TROOPS ARE HERE!

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Build your own deck

WATCH THE VIDEO

Learn the tricks • Get the skills

How to Install Composite Decking: One of 100 TOH videos that will make you smarter than your neighbor

thisoldhouse.com/video



your
TOH
FAQs

We asked you a whole lot of questions to produce this annual Reader-Created Issue. So it seemed only fair to let you ask a few of us. Here with answers to some of the most frequently asked questions you send us at TOH.Letters@thisoldhouse.com

readermail

How does TOH TV select houses?

We choose two projects a season. The fall project is a house tour feature, where the crew can stay close to home, the winter one is located in a cold climate, where outdoor work may be harder taken. Learn more about the selection process at thisoldhouse.com/home.

Where can I find more information about the products and services that TOH features?

For items in the magazine, check the Directory, which is near the back of each issue. For both The Old House and Aul-Thru Old House, visit thisoldhouse.com/home.

What's happened to the houses that have appeared in Save The Old House?

The majority of the ones that we have updates on either have been saved or are still available. To check the status of dozens of houses and to see related photos, go to thisoldhouse.com/home.

My wife and I just completed a kitchen redo—and we're still together! Seriously, how does she share our project with the rest of the TOH community?

We're always excited to see what our readers are up to. It's why we do this Reader-Created Issue each year. And it's why we try to get a reader's project in every issue. Send your before-and-after snaps and a brief description of what you did to readerscreated@thisoldhouse.com. If we feature yours, we'll send you a check for \$250—as long as you did most of the work. Tell them you can cook your wife a nice meal in that new kitchen.

how to
watch
it

The editor: This Old House magazine, 125 West 59th Street, New York, NY 10019. Or a mail TOH, letters@thisoldhouse.com. Include your full name, address and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

I decorated over the paint in before and after: Kitchen. How can I get the same color in my kitchen? Because lighting during photo shoots affects paint colors—which can also be affected by the colors of surrounding surfaces, including tile, floors, and cabinets—your best bet is to take your copy of TOH to the paint store and ask the experts to help you. They can scan photos and do some color matching to get the color you want. For more help selecting paint colors, visit thisoldhouse.com/home.

My brother jokes that my house looks like a tent down. So I thought a Photoshopping video would be a good starting point for a makeover. How can I get one? Some builders? Well, start by making sure your camera is set to take the highest-resolution photos it can (in

your case, a minimum resolution of 4456x4456 pixels and a maximum of 2000x2000). Capture the front of your house and a close-up of the side. Then send the best snaps to redo@thisoldhouse.com. And let your pals know they could be called up for some redo duty.

There's one thing missing from my workspace: a TOH T-shirt.

Is there any way I can get one? You'll want to have your patch skills, because the guys on Aul-Thru Old House decide who gets one. They're always looking for unusual objects, so if you have a storage tool or product related to home improvement, send it to This Old House Productions Inc., Attn: "Who Is It?," PO Box 130, Concord, MA 01740. Objects are non-refundable and must not weigh more than 20 pounds. If your shaggy-guy reputation on the show, you'll get a shirt.

checklist { June.09 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW



Put up a bat house

Free pest control? A single brown bat can eat up to 600 mosquitoes an hour. Give the little creature an indoor safe place to roost by mounting a bat house 15 to 18 feet high on a tree or pole. Bats like warm, dark spaces, so make sure the house faces south or east so that it gets at least a few hours of sunlight. You can buy a premade bat house, but building one from scratch is a cinch. Get the how-to at thisoldhouse.com/bonus.



Tackle June pruning

Grab your shears. Now's the time to trim back many types of flowering shrubs and trees so that you'll get loads of growth next year. The general rule is to remove blooms just as they turn brown—and knowing and just think: cutting off the new buds that sprout right after the flowers die. Not all plants behave the same, though, so double-check with your garden center to trim your cuts correctly.



Spruce up your walkway

The path to your door should be as inviting as the cook who you'll meet this month, so make sure the surface won't trip up guests. If it cracks, is uneven or covered with moss, use a large patch with new stone or concrete. Then brush for weeds and replace blown-out pebbles. Visit thisoldhouse.com/bonus for more info on walking repairs and upkeep.



Clean and seal your deck

Keeping your summer hangout looking good—and protecting it from the elements—is as easy as 1-2-3:
1. Clear away leaves and dead branches.
2. Scrub the boards or pressure wash them on a gentle setting (no higher than 1,500 psi) with a cleaner that's safe for your plants and lawn.
3. Apply a tinted sealer to protect the wood against UV rays. Wait for a dry day when the boards feel warm to the touch; the air temp should be at least 50 degrees F.
Finally, see how to do a quick safety check of your deck at thisoldhouse.com/bonus.

Order firewood

It's tough to picture warming up in front of the hearth when days are chinking, but June's the ideal time to stock up on wood for the winter season. It takes at least six months of seasoning for logs to be ready to burn. Some sawmills offer discounts when you order off season. If you really want to save cash—and get a good workout—split firewood yourself. Extra buy at thisoldhouse.com/bonus.



ASK SHERWIN-WILLIAMS How To Win Friends And Influence People.

Meeting in a new place can be tough. But remember: Your neighbors are eager to meet you (and see inside their houses). Fortunately, with your eye for color plus our expert advice and exceptional paint, the welcoming committee will be too motivated to peer into your walls to check blank about asking any silly questions. And if you're lucky, they'll bring delicious baked goods. Got a question? There's nothing you can't ask Sherwin-Williams.



 sherwin-williams.com
SAV 6601

EXTENDING

Mow just once a month... seriously

All of us have fantasized about grass that needs little watering or mowing. But Jackson Wicks didn't just mow and repeat several years developing Phoenix Premium Grass Seed, a drought resistant mix of five native grasses that grow so slowly you need to cut your lawn only every five weeks. The mix (named after Jackson's son, now a avid gardener) will take hold in every region except the Deep South. \$13 for a 5-lb. bag (enough to treat about 1,000 square feet). phoenixpremium.com



PROTECTING

Make swings safe

Yardlanders are well patrolled. More than 50,000 kids are rushed to the ER each year because of injuries while using backyard play equipment. McRoberts Builders, a certified playground safety inspector with the National Recreation and Parks Association, offers her top tips for insuring these visits:

- Install rubber mats over a 12-inch deep layer of similar wood chips beneath any apparatus, including swings or slides.
- The cushion should extend 5 feet in all directions from the play equipment.
- Close up open 2x4s that act as swing supports.
- Fill down sharp points, splinters.
- Don't play areas at high schools, such as soccer fields or stumps.

PLANTING

No room for a garden? Plant one in a neighbor's yard instead

If you want to grow your own salad veggies this summer but don't have the space, the growers at North Shore Growing Community just need you a permit. Visit their website, nshgrowing.com, enter your city and state, and you'll get a list of local homeowners who'll let you garden without limit. In return, you give them part of your harvest. Those with gardens "for sale" can find willing hosts thanks to their site too. We think it's a pretty neat swap system.



AT THE FLASH → Homeowners in Suffolk, Virginia, who accidentally set off their own burglar alarms now face a fine of up to \$100.



Roofs beat the heat

So-called cool roofs, which reflect 80 percent or more of the sun's rays, are rapidly gaining in popularity. You'll need white metal panels or shingles to reach the performance level, but if replacing your roof isn't in your budget, painting a white or cool shingles with a light-colored elastomeric coating, such as Duck's Solar Shield, will help lower temps inside.



One-day mortgage rescue

If you're struggling with payments, assistance may be coming to a city near you. The "Save A Dream" loan, sponsored by the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America, a nonprofit mortgage broker who lends to low-income families, has been holding workshops across the country to help homeowners restructure their loans. Instead of refinancing loans as low as 2 percent, borrowers can only one hour to qualify for the workshop. For more details, visit naca.org.

Reporting by Kristi Panchell and Natalie Rodriguez

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Edited by Deborah Sneedman

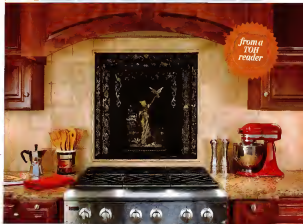
inside

10 USES

GET PLANTS FOR FREE

MAKE PICTURE FRAMES

MORE



4 SMART IDEAS

Summer-front backsplash



WHO: Renny and Chuck Davis **WHERE:** Louisville, Kentucky
WHAT: "We bought this 'summer front' at a farm auction for \$110," says Renny, who had been looking at picture frames were tile to protect the wall behind her cooktop. The Victorian-era cast-iron antique, once used to cover a fireplace during the off-season, is now a fancy focal point that saved the Davises more than \$300 in materials. Chuck coated the piece with oil-water to make it easy to clean, then mounted it between the wall studs. We like how it turns the kitchen into the parlor of their home.

PHOTO: ALAN KAPLAN; STYLING: KATHARINE

Gift cards

They keep on giving long after you've cashed them in. One handy reader clued us in about all the things he does with them.



WHO: Bill Tussard
WHERE: North Billerica, Mass.

1 Use as a straightedge.

Keep a few cards on your workbench for marking cuts on small pieces of trim and other materials.

2 Spot-fix a rule floor.

Why dirty a broom when gluing down a few loose tiles? Instead, strip off one edge of card with packing shavers to make a coping edge, used to apply the mastic, then lay it.



3 Get rid of air bubbles.

Rub the edge of a card along a freshly wallpapered surface—especially in corners and around tight spots near windows and doors—to help the paper lie smoothly.



4 Mix and apply glue and putties.

Use the card to mix and apply small batches of patching compound or two-part epoxy, or to work stiff putty until it's elastic enough to apply

5 Scrape off junk.

Keep a few cards on hand in your workshop and kitchen to remove paint chips, stubborn labels, candle wax, and other sticky stuff from smooth surfaces.

6 Help crack your tub.

Scrape away old, sticky caulk with the corner of a card (or two). Then cut off one corner using utility

sawhorses, wet the edges, and use it to smooth down a freshly caulked tub.

7 Level just about anything.

Put cards to use and use them to level out a countertop or help a door hang plumb.

8 Remove paint from details.

Wet scarping paint or stain off decorative



moldings or turned-leg furniture. But don't let it match the piece's profile and trim off any excess with a utility knife. Then use your customer scraper to get off every little nook and cranny.

9 Stabilize furniture.

Get cards to shore and size and fit the pieces under the legs of wobbly tables and desks to help them stand up straight. If necessary, use glue or double-sided tape to keep the cards in place.

10 reader tips



10 uses for white cards
Find them at thinkwhite.com

A legacy should be handed down, not hand washed.

For over 80 years, millions have placed their trust, and treasured heirlooms, in a Miele dishwasher. Safer than hand washing, our advanced China and Crystal cycle automatically regulates temperature and water pressure so your cherished table settings will remain spotless for generations. Gentle, thorough, silent—a Miele family tradition and our pledge to you. We guarantee it, or your money back. miele.com



Miele
Anything else is a compromise.

HOW TO Grow more flowers by layering



The Old House Garden has a long history of growing plants by layering. In a single year, you can grow plants by layering that have been in the ground for 100 years.

Why blow your hard-earned cash on flowers when you can grow new plants from old ones? Layering, one of the easiest forms of plant propagation, works especially well for hydrangeas, anemones, and foxgloves. If you've got one that's been established for two years or longer, follow these steps to stretch your garden dollar: (1) Find a bushy, potted branch that's 12 to 24 inches long. Prune off the nodes and leaves, keeping just two or three on the tip of the branch. (2) Dig a trench 1 to 2 inches deep beside the plant's base, then bend the branch into the trench and secure it with a wire pin. (3) Cover the branch with soil and water the area. (4) Top with a brick to mark the spot and ensure that the branch stays buried. (5) Check for roots in a year or two. When you see them, sever the branch from the mother plant, carefully dig out the new plant, and release it.

PRODUCTS Cord-control basics

Stranded cables and cords aren't just an annoyance—they're also a trip hazard, and the kinds can cause pressure wear and tear. These tips and product picks will help you tame the tangles.

—MICHAEL OCKENFELS

Use a flexible sleeve to bundle together different cords belonging to the same electronic unit. Label each cord to avoid confusion—or worse, accidental unplugging. Cord Control Kit (gold-colored sleeve), \$28, cablecontrol.com

Wrap thinner cables, such as phone and electrical cords, around spools for overnight storage. Cable Turret, \$24, cableturret.com



Extra-long cords that are routed behind desks and furniture should be suspended off the floor to keep them from snapping when you yank them or dust. Command Cord Clip, \$4, command.com

A single Ethernet cable that snakes its way around a room can be secured to walls or baseboards to keep it from tripping you up. Command Adhesive Cord Clips, \$2, amazon.com

To keep groups of cords together when they branch off from a larger bundle, adjustable ties with labels provide flexibility. Elastic Velcro Cable Ties, \$5, amazon.com

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Everything you need to frame a photograph

Those graduation and wedding pictures you're snapping this month might be priceless—but the prices they charge at framing shops to preserve your keepsakes will give you a serious case of sticker shock. You're a DIY'er, so why not make the frames yourself? Sure, you'll try on a few backs for looks, but they're still cheaper than having even a couple of pictures framed at a specialty store—and you'll use them over and over again. Pick up the materials (prefinished molding, glass, mats, foam board) or do it a crafts or framing store, gather up your favorite photos, then pop right in and get started. —JENNIFER THAYER



Tools



miter cutter The miter slicer along the track to make clean 45-degree cuts. Use the threaded rod to secure your photo in snugly (see \$44.22 agingpro.com)



miter saw Quick, lock-down your saw to the perfect angle every time, and an adjustable length (see amazon.com)



four-way speed clamp The handy device holds individual components together while the glue dries. \$29.95 kennedy.com



point driver or engineer's hammer Clamp in place (20% superstrength) compared to a hammer to attach flat panels but not the glass and backing in place or use a specialty hammer (\$23.50 levelup.com) to help place a picture.

Materials

Attach with free **lines tape** (\$25 for 10 feet lines.com) to the back of the mat so that your photo won't move when placed inside. See **wood glue** (\$10 for 10 ounces amazon.com) to hold the material together before using the glue.



Who knew?

To make create frames with **handmade** wood with **extra** made in the **product** (woodcrafter.com) and **make** the **image** of **wood** and **dry**.

If you could design your dream window, what would it be?



myMarvin by

P. Marfisi

P. Allen Smith
Garden Home Designer



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⊕ TRUS+ED EVERYWHERE ⊖



Gut the old, Google the new

By using online resources to purchase materials, score tools, and even draw up a floor plan, this couple turned a chopped-up attic into a snazzy master suite. BY LUCYRA FETTER KASDER • Photographs by DAVID PERDUE

before+after:
attic

sweet
attic
suite



Skylights lend
sun-drenched
illumination
when making
the most of the
space.



PHOTO: Claudia and Felipe Meraz
PHOTO: Pictaweb, RJ
PHOTO: Converted their attic into their
master bedroom, bath, and home office.

soon to be a nursery? Adding on wasn't an option. So Claudia and Felipe Meraz looked up—to the attic. While the ceiling was pitched from 7 feet down to 4 and makeshift walls sliced up the space, the couple saw they could open it up and even add another back. To start over, they ditched the work themselves—once they learned how. Felipe, an orthopedic who wanted to work with his hands, and Claudia, a graphic designer who shared Felipe's passion for details, taught themselves from library books with tools they bought secondhand. After mastering basic skills (and web help from friends who are licensed planners), they tackled everything on their own, except the skylights and drywall. They even drew the floor plan. Felipe had room dimensions from Google SketchUp, a 3-D software program he downloaded. Start to finish it took 14 months, then baby Nathaniel arrived. "It's a way, the renovation was our first baby," says Felipe.

The small 1950s ranch suited its new owners, except for one thing: They wanted a master suite. But how to get it when the first floor was jammed with the kitchen, living and dining rooms, the home's sole bathroom, and two tiny bedrooms, one



[before]

Before: Partition walls around the stairwell obstructed the flow and blocked light from windows on either end. After: A built-in floor-to-ceiling shelving system opened up the space and drew sunlight from the new skylights by David Perdue. Built-ins keep the space clean and functional.

Get free design help

Google SketchUp lets you architect at your fingertips



Rather than hiring an architect and paying Google fees for a costly, severely off-limits renovation, Felipe Miranda downloaded Google SketchUp for his attic remodel. This free, easy-to-use program allows users to create 3D models of their space, add furniture and materials, and view the design from any angle.

The application, available since 2006, has become a favorite of TGH staffers, including technical editor Mark Powers. "It helps you understand the project," he says. "You can stand back and see how things fit with other rooms, or a little building without getting a headache."

For more information on Google SketchUp, visit www.google.com/sketchup.



before



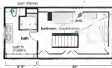
after

Classic bid Felipe's attic in a modern SketchUp before and after Felipe's design work. On the left: before; on the right: after.

before + after

The existing attic was a mess of pipes and wires. After removing the toilet and toilet tank, the homeowners painted the walls, added furniture and materials, and view the design from any angle.

1. A rear-discharge toilet—plumbed to the floor but its waste pipe—topped to go through the floor joists—wasn't broken behind the new wall instead.



2. Some built-in storage—a built-in shelf and a built-in cabinet—was added to the room. The homeowners kept everything from out of season clothes to suitcases for holiday decorations.

3. A half-trail, shower—built to allow for better ventilation—was added to the room. The homeowners kept everything from out of season clothes to suitcases for holiday decorations.

the key details

• Built-in bookshelves on the staircase wall provide the home office with a place for a library.



• A prefab shower unit with an MDF interior was built into a curved space in the bathroom. Materials: Home Depot, Lowe's, Kmart, Sears.



• skylight know-how See our guide to skylights on page 100.

• Skylights supplement the window and cast light on the room to edges. There's even a small built-in shelf to hold the reading light, which shows to a full, bright view. Materials: Def. Spikes, Chatterbox, Raydon-Landmesser, Apple.



• Open shelves, made of red oak plywood and treated with white oil, provide a spot for books and a place for a reading light. The shelves are under the shower enclosure. Materials: Legat.



• A shower clad in monochromatic—a new wall, the detail of the shower unit (with an MDF interior) was built into a curved space in the bathroom. Materials: Home Depot, Lowe's, Kmart, Sears.



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landscaping

A green oasis in a small urban space

That's what this determined city dweller created from the wasteland behind his rowhouse. Here's how he did it. BY TONYA MORRIS HANCOCK



WHO: David Burton
WHERE: Brooklyn, NY
WHAT: Cleared his city yard, added a patio, and planted it.

The backyard was a wreck. Once I started pulling up the rotting deck that sat in the middle and the crumbling cinder-block retaining walls around it, I unearthed piles of broken concrete and discarded bricks. But my wife, Yvonne, and I had big plans for the bare-patched dirt when we bought our Brooklyn brownstone three years ago. We'd make it into a lush urban oasis, with a patio surrounded by plants and a cherry tree for privacy and shade. It would be a place to entertain and chill out after work.

Clearing would prove to be the most challenging part of the project. Once I'd pulled up the deck, I set to work with a sledgehammer, breaking up the concrete walkways that ran beside it. Along with a lot of debris, I found remnants of a granite slab that was probably as old as the house, which was built in 1903. I placed a patio for the middle of the yard, soil brought in from the back of the lot in the center—I figured it would help with drainage. Besides, throwing stuff out isn't easy in New York City. I had to lug my trash and set it on the curb with the garbage after knocking it through the house, which is 40 feet deep and has narrow hallways. And I could leave out only a few bags at a time.

With the clearing done, I could work on finishing. My idea was to start with basic elements—pavers, walls, trees—then make several changes. The yard sloped toward the concrete pad outside the back door



and the area flooded. So to improve drainage, I decided to terrace the yard, adding stepping stones leading off the concrete pad to a four-inch retaining wall that steps up to the new 12-by-12-foot patio. Four-foot-deep flower beds border it on both sides. A 30-inch-high wall in back screens off a 10-by-20-foot sand bed.

We used brick for the walls but chose rammed concrete pavers for the patio—they have the feel of old cobble-

he did it all himself



[Before]

Before with the deck and walkways removed, what remained was a patch of dirt, lawn, weeds, and potted plants. **BEFORE:** Potted plants, trees, and shrubs surrounded the patio.

about 3 to 6 gallons of bricks, gravel, sand, and pebbles were delivered to the sidewalk, and on one day I had to get them through the house as a back track. Don't ask how many cups I made. The final track didn't fit through the back door, so I had to unload them through various reference books, magazines, and the Internet. I gradually learned how to lay brick walls and patio pavers, putting down plenty of gravel underneath for drainage.

Intensive clearing the yard in March and finished the perennials late May. These I made lots of trips to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden—it's just a quick subway ride away—for inspiration, including what to plant in sun and what in shade. The perennial beds there are amazing; they really show how to use color, texture, and leaf shape to design a garden.

I work dangerously close to a farmer's market in Burlington, and I begin bringing perennials and shrubs home to the subway, a few at a time. I like how varied and long-lasting foliage is, so I choose many plants for their leaves and not flowers as accents. I did almost hold the planting the first year and the next last summer, with help from my neighbours Joe and Rick, a paragon cedar fence on two sides to hide the ugly plants and trees link onto 14th. As I saved \$10,000 by doing everything myself.

The garden is like a slow-motion work of art. It'll never be done with it. After 20 years in an apartment dwelling, I love getting my hands in the soil. There's one constant element of change, though, thanks to our new terrace, Romy, who loves to dig. I may have to put several plants in some places. We're already with dirt. Having this garden is such a luxury to us. It's amazing how peaceful and quiet it is—right in the heart of the city. ■



LAST JULY 12 feet square, the poling pit is a mix of sun and shade, which allows for a rich array of plants, including yuccas, agaves, a patch of dwarf silvers pine and a Kwanaa cherry tree. Three grows between the flowers' oblong stones.

BELOW LEFT: The retaining wall at the rear of the yard is topped with ascending stepping stones that lead to a garden. **BELOW RIGHT:** Plants growing along the base of the wall include chives, English daisy, fescue grass, and mouse-hopping ferns.



ABOVE: A family outing in the Inland Empire's former market in Inland Heights, where David bought most of the plants that he and his wife, Vivian, put in their yard — and that they bring. *Photo: www.fox11.com*



Key garden features (2) under trees
(1) climbing hydrangea (1) Japanese maple
(1) white tree (1) weeping cherry
(1) Silver birch (1) Blue beech grass
(1) viburnum (1) black rhodod. wall
(1) sardonia (1) amelia-bush (1) Lavender
Tuffet, redwood (1) beech (1) Beech by
(1) hawthorn (1) clematis (1) rose tree
(1) Kalmia (1) flowering cherry tree (1) dwarf
Siberian pine (1) yucca (1) Japanese Forest
grass (1) white hydrangea (1) tulips
(1) black staining wall (1) weeping stone
(1) poured concrete path

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Grown-up colors for a kid's room

Using paint left over from other projects, this busy mom transformed her new baby's room with blue walls, green stripes, touches of red, and a fresh and family tree. BY DEBORAH BALDWIN



WHO: Stephanie Kropfman
WHERE: Rochester, NY
WHAT: Crisscrossed a child's room that
will grow old gracefully—with paint

A baby's bedroom calls for a color palette and decor as it touches that are playful, but that doesn't mean they have to be childish. While Stephanie Kropfman was awaiting the birth of son Zane (her sixth child), she found inspiration for the nursery in a visiting shot of a room with a tree motif. "I'd never done anything like this before," she says of the paint magic she worked on her baby's quarters. "But fixing up our old farmhouse is my passion."

Previous projects had left her with half full cans of latex-green and deep red latex. So after painting the crib wall white, she called on her husband, Scott, for help taping off 8-inch-wide stripes. "The walls aren't plumb," she says, "and I wanted to keep on the track!" So he, she says, adding the green stripes was easier than she thought. "The trick is to pull off the tape slowly—at an angle—when the paint is still tacky."

Stephanie chose a grayish blue for the other walls, tying them to the striped wall with horizontal bands of green and red, plus white polka dots dabbed on to between with the end of an artist's brush handle. She sketched the tree as chalk first, "If you don't like it, you just wipe and redo." Would-be mom as to the branches, she brought them with air wood cutters and her house—see for each of her children—that she painted. The successful mom even gave her old baby food jar to use. "Turn out they're perfect for keeping each up paint in the study."



strokes
of
genius



TOP: A serene blue, for little Zane, picks up the right 80 colors in tones. ABOVE: Baby stripes in Tupperware. RIGHT: Decorating with old food jars. Photo: Sherrie Williams



Victorian-style powder room

Salvaged winemaking and an antique sink give this new half-bath a 19th-century pedigree. Here's how to appropriate the look at your house

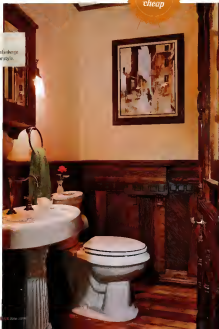
charm
on the
cheap

WFO - Paolo Rizzo
WFOF - Atlanta
WMAZ - Loudon/Chattanooga (change to give a little more major style).

A small half-bath that's out of sync with the rest of the house is a good place to make a big design statement—often with a retro twist: oak or formica-topped vanity (as in her own early-20th-century house), The Old Farmer under Peale floor over old school, relying on a chair-caned stool to create a lived-in look. “We wanted it to seem as if it had always been there,” Jane says of the brand-new half-bath, which was carved out of existing first-floor space during a whole-house remodel.

The room's warm, distinctive character comes from the use of a antique pedestal sink, reclaimed oak and walnut woodwork, a salvaged medicine cabinet, and old oak flooring.

The key to scoring and sewing old house parts? "Be patient and don't tug ineffectively at architectural salvages and antique stones," says Rose. "And when it comes to fabrics and trims, substitute good reproductions for old versions of those fabrics to coordinate plumbing fixtures." Here, elements you can use to create a similar space.



travel ring
A simple bronze finisher ring for a single hand towel is all that's needed for a powder room that gets light traffic. bit.ly/130Z
homedit.com



wood medicine cabinet
This wall-mounted oak medicine cabinet comes as an easy-to-assemble kit that includes pre-cut wood, two glass shelves, a hinged mirror and brass hardware. \$149 (reg. \$179) at www.homedepot.com. It'll match the room's interest and love. ©2005 GreenSource Inc. www.greenhouse.com



shepherd's-crook faucet
 Give a sink Victorian-era flair with a solid brass cross-handle faucet in an antiqued bronze finish. \$149
plumbingplus.com



Homeowner Tip
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"Old pedestals are shorter than today's sinks, so if you want to use one, let the plumber know ahead of time to ensure that drain and water lines are put in at the right height."



period palette
To add wall color that is keeping with the Victorian theme, try a rich shade such as Spring Violet or Godfrich in a wavy eggshell finish. \$30 per gallon
kristinaurmont.com



pedestal sink
A pedestal sink
columns pedestal base
supporting a wide and
basin with a rim
finished sink \$439
justrashhardware.com



Eastlake-style wainscoting

The select and unselect windows installed in this room was salvaged from a former library. To get the look, you can assemble a variety of glass and metal windows with laminar cladding for the needed privacy. Brushed or dark wood slat, wait a few minutes, then wipe off excess with soap & water with some polyurethane. Molding: \$0.65-\$0.70 per linear foot. Plywood: \$1.00 per sheet. Plywood: \$0.50 per sheet. Plywood: \$0.50 per sheet.

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garden
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Handsome stone garden shed

Recycled materials and a flair for fine details helped this DIYer create a garden shed stylish enough to impress everyone in the family. BY DEBORAH BAUMER



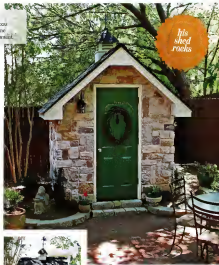
WHO: Ray LaCroix
WHERE: Gerington, Texas
WHAT: Built a little stone cottage for lawn equipment

It may be relegated to storing rakes and hedge clippers, but a shed should provide a little eye candy, too. Just ask retired shop teacher Ray LaCroix. He's built four sheds in the past 10 years—at his old house, at a friend's, at one of his son's, and his latest, this charming, but far more of stone.

"I needed a place for the lawn mower," he says simply of the 7 by 9-foot miniature cottage, embellished with a lowered cupola, a stained-glass window, and paneled front door. Since the shed sits at the edge of the back patio, it had crept out for a garden aesthetic—specifically, his wife Donna suggested, stone walls.

So Ray shopped for locally fabricated limestone veneer, hired a pro to pour the concrete floor, then recycled the empty space from a display-stand deck for framing, shingles left over from roofing the house, and a pile of unused landscape stone for flower beds. Ray, who's also busy restoring the main house, enjoys the way sheds go up quickly. "It's a very little dimension," he says. "And everybody needs a shed. The garage is for the car."

A couple of lessons Ray has learned along the way: Hang the door so there's nothing out ("it opens up a lot of space inside") and finish with a lot of hand-scaping. "It makes a shed look like it belongs to you." Donna is not the only one delighted with the results, he says. "Now my daughter-in-law, who lives down the road, is begging me to do a shed for her too." ■



his
shed
rocks



ABOVE: To create a storage shed worthy of a place in the crafts, Ray LaCroix upcycled an oak firewood storage shed. LEFT: The stained-glass window came from an antique shop; the lowered cupola is Ray's handiwork.

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Ceiling fans

Readers told us they're more likely to buy a fan than any other appliance this summer. We have this advice on whether to spend a little or a lot. by *CHRISTINE WARD • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACQUE WILSON*

you
asked
for it

Want to be more comfortable physically and financially this summer? It's a fan, which costs you as little as \$20 to save the blades you counted a loss and circulate warm air in winter. (Some of the most affordable models for blades clockwise, cooling your ceiling, and reverse gears. Each of the fan has a 52-inch blade span, the right size for rooms that's 200 to 400 square feet. Each includes a bar for holding up the blades if there's a problem with the bar. The price of the most expensive model includes bar at home prices for \$200. Beyond that, more power, softness, and opening costs are a few differences to consider.

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IS IT HOT?
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Blades

The blades are made of lightweight, yet strong material, which means they're resistant to warping and come with a lifetime warranty. The blades are 52 inches long and 14 inches wide. They're 25 degrees above the horizontal, which means they're efficient at moving air and less likely to be noisy.

Control

Use the remote control with the fan. It has a 3-speed and 3-speed fan speed.

Control

The fan has a remote control with the fan. It has a 3-speed and 3-speed fan speed.

Blades

The blades are made of lightweight, yet strong material, which means they're resistant to warping and come with a lifetime warranty. The blades are 52 inches long and 14 inches wide. They're 25 degrees above the horizontal, which means they're efficient at moving air and less likely to be noisy.

Control

The fan has a remote control with the fan. It has a 3-speed and 3-speed fan speed.

Wobble-free fan

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What
your
plans



Hand-pumped water

"Unless the fishies springwater hand pump outside my grandpa's old house. We would fill our jugs with coldwater and take them home to drink."

—LAPTOPS FY-2000-07 APPROX. 60—

Deep front porches.

"My grandfather built my childhood home in 1936. Its back porch was 30 feet deep and ran the length of the front facade. It was a great place to play as a child and a great place to gather with the family."

JACQUES F. FLANDRÉ, SPRINGFIELD, IL

Wooden screen doors

"I miss our old wooden screen door and my mother pilling. And don't dance for"—BAMBI: "Summer dance!"

— info@nps.gov 800.557.6868

Country vegetable patches

"And up the road from our house my family had a vegetable garden. I used to do there string beans and all the kinds I can remember, with fresh tomatoes for supper. When the garden was turned over in the spring, I kept my eyes out for arrowheads and other treasures."

—REDFY MAJESTY WILLIAM
CHURCHILL, 1803

TOP LEFT: Handpumps provided the most refreshing water imaginable at least in our visitors' minds. **TOP RIGHT:** Surfers control an American's diet their cooking of food as delicious as pierogies. **LEFT:** Backyard vegetable gardens were seen in many families, often sources of fresh produce. **ABOVE:** Lots of runners recalled the friendly crowd of their old cross-country.



Ask
Your Own
House

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This Old House

Downloaded from <http://ajph.org/> on September 11, 2015





TOP LEFT: Walker wears a daffydowndilly head butam like the parsons. **TOP RIGHT:** Dumbwaiter's offered a boost to homeowners' (and servants') way of getting the vitts from basement kitchen. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Operator that'll turn wheels of ferris from 'twenties and the best summer fun. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Back in the day, once provided primary access for hand help.



what do you miss?
Start your own debate on
what's old is new at www.azek.com



"We had a screened-in sleeping porch right off the back of our house. I remember the crisp summer air breezing across my face at night as I fell asleep."

—BRIAN KANDY, SEAFIELD, TENN.

Milk-bottle homes

"The house I grew up in had a metal milk can that held four milk bottles in each corner. I'd take down each bottle, use it for the milk, and then I'd take the bottle and put it back in the corner. And then I'd take the bottle and put it back in the corner."

—SUSAN KILLEN, MORGENTHAU, TENN.

Floor registers

"In the floor of my bedroom there was a floor register. It had a handle that you could pull out and then push it into the floor below. Mine looked right down into our living room. I'd find it for Christmas one day."

—KATE DIANEY WILSON, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Newel-post lamp

"My grandfather had this newel-post lamp that was mounted on top of a newel post. It was made of brass and had a glass globe in the middle. I'd find it for Christmas one day."

—GAIL MALLOY, NEW YORK CITY

Steam shuttles

"I remember the steam shuttles on my parents' house. They were black with many coats of green paint. Most of the time they were in the garage for the family car."

—JOHN BRADLEY, CONVICTION, LA.

Deep overhang

"The thing I miss most about old houses is the overhang. Before air conditioning, the overhangs were a great way to keep the sun off the porch. I'd find it for Christmas one day."

when it rained, I could hear the water dripping off the roof. It was such a comforting feeling."

—LAUREL GLASSCO, NEWPORT NEWS, VA.

Dumbwaiters

"Our dumbwaiter took up the space of a chimney, but it was useful for moving laundry and dishes to the basement and food upstairs to and from the kitchen."

—JENNIFER L. HOFF, SPRINGFIELD, VA.

Solid walls

"We live in a brick house that was built in 1900. The layout is lovely, but it definitely lacks the character and dignity of the drive. I grew up in a house where everything was solid. You can hear everything going on here—like a landing, some lightbulbs, broken doors, and so forth. But the walls in my old house were made of good old-fashioned plaster, which certainly had more of a character than today's new plasterboard."

—JENNIFER L. HOFF, SPRINGFIELD, VA.

Steam radiators

"When I remember the 100-year-old house I grew up in, the thing I recall most fondly is the old-fashioned steam radiators. In winter, when it came home after a freezing cold day of school, I'd sit off the radiator and wait, and I'd get the heat from the radiator. I was still used to the thing when I was still in the house. I'd find it for Christmas one day."

—CONNIE KATH ARMS, SALMON, OREG.

Steep back stoops

"I always thought the back stoop in my old house was the coolest thing. When the front stoop was built with a handrail, the back stoop was built with a handrail. I'd find it for Christmas one day."

—TERRY L. ON THE TOWNSHIP, OREG.



TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES; TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES; MIDDLE RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES; BOTTOM RIGHT: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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job site

✓ Tightest board tolerances
in the industry

✓ AZEK-Trim, the #1 brand of trim
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CORRECTOR.



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shopping

Garden urns

We noticed that these classically shaped pots popped up in the yard makeovers you submitted to our Reader Remodel Contest. Here, even more styles to consider
By LINDA WOODWARD/RENOVATOR • Photography: MARI WILSON

you
inspired
us

Jane Gold, Holmdel, NJ



Steve Dodge, Westbrook, Maine

Jane Gold grows her petiole white rose punch with butterfly-friendly plantings in lightweight resin urns that have the look of cast iron. Steve Dodge made a single concrete urn the focal point of his formal rose garden. Whether arranged in groups or placed individually, each container adds a special note to any yard, front entry, or room tabletop. And the numerous shapes of these planters has been around for centuries: first as hand-carved limestone and marble and later in the Victorian era, in factory-produced cast iron and terra-cotta. Today's concrete, fiberglass, and resin versions are less pricey, often lighter in weight, and more waterproof.

classic curves

James J. Hall's
Shades of Marble
+ Making Sculpture
This large white, lightweight resin urn is a Victorian era look in a modern twist. It's made of resin and is perfect for the outdoors. In garden. Or in. www.jamesjhall.com



+ LARGE

planting ideas

Learn what to put inside what. Use shade and other tips at thishousehasplants.com

tall and terra-cotta

ORANGE AND MARBLE
+ Guards 12 inches tall
+ Made of terra-cotta
This simple pot with an inverted bell shape is perfect for showcasing small flowering plants. Terra-cotta does not hold water, though, so for succulents and plants with watered. S4S.com/landscare.com



+ MEDIUM

+ SMALL

rock solid

240045704
+ Guards 12 inches tall
+ Made of marble
Set a pair of white or blue resin pots with round up in them. The square opening makes it self-contained a sturdy stand, such as a bouquet of flowers. gardenofmarble.com

LARGE
→

Big doesn't have to mean expensive. These urns stand nearly 2 to 3 feet tall and pack a lot of decorative punch without knocking out your budget.

barrel beauty

POTTERY BARN
• Stands 26 inches tall.
• Made of terra-cotta.
Reminiscent of ancient vessels used to carry water, this urn has great visual impact when filled with cascading, trailing plants such as sweet fennel grass or flowering ivy. \$100, potterybarn.com



36" 26"

simply
scalloped

WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 36 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
This urn is often considered 18th-century cast-iron art, but it's a modern creation, such as pearls or velvet balls. \$60, willarddesign.com



36" 36"

think deep

CHICORY GARDENS
• Stands 23 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
Multicolored being called forth, this urn is a great for deep-rooted plants. \$120, chicorygardens.com



36" 23"



36" 36"

high style
WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 36 inches tall.
• Made of fiberglass.
Once off a tall, white, ceramic vase, this urn is a masterpiece. Just be sure to put it in the bottom tier to keep it from tipping. \$100, willarddesign.com



36" 36"



36" 36"

aged patina
HOME DEPOT
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
What if the vessels of old times without the price or fragility? An urn with a patina that cracks over the brick. Purple fountain grass would complement the patina shape and neutral shade. \$40, homedepot.com



36" 36"

whitewashed
CHICORY GARDENS
• Stands 20 inches tall.
• Made of fiberglass.
For a relaxing look, think your favorite white paint of these in a wide urn. Made to look like weathered stone, they are beautiful enough to stand empty. \$100, chicorygardens.com



36" 36"

MEDIUM
→

Medium urns are especially versatile. Place them along entryways or put one on a pedestal to create a dramatic focal point in the yard.

broad appeal
WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
With its wide mouth, this urn is a masterpiece. Just be sure to put it in the bottom tier to keep it from tipping. \$100, willarddesign.com



36" 24"

trophy style
HOME DEPOT
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of fiberglass.
Let yourself show off. This urn is a masterpiece. Just be sure to put it in the bottom tier to keep it from tipping. \$100, homedepot.com



36" 24"

garden globe
WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
Put up your garden globe with a friend. These spheres come with a Greek key motif. Fill with moss for a modern look or go for a shabby chic look. \$100, willarddesign.com



36" 24"

fringe frame
SUNLIT CLAY
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of clay.
Pyne like to change up your room's frequency, this urn is a masterpiece. Just be sure to put it in the bottom tier to keep it from tipping. \$100, sunlitclay.com



36" 24"

budget
pick

blank slate
YARD LOVER
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of plastic.
An urn this low price makes it a budget pick. It's a blank slate, so you can use it to display your plants. \$10, yardlover.com



36" 24"

authentic
WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of plastic.
This is a classic. It's a blank slate, so you can use it to display your plants. \$10, willarddesign.com



36" 24"

budget
pick

containing cup
YARD LOVER
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of plastic.
Let the white color do the talking. It's a blank slate, so you can use it to display your plants. \$10, yardlover.com



36" 24"

terracotta bowl
YARD LOVER
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of plastic.
Placed with a large, trailing plant, this urn is a masterpiece. Just be sure to put it in the bottom tier to keep it from tipping. \$10, yardlover.com



36" 24"

SMALL
→

Making out at foot tall, these planters are skinnier in stature but big on detail. Add them to a display of urns or set a single one on a tabletop.

garden globe
WILLARD DESIGN
• Stands 24 inches tall.
• Made of resin.
Put up your garden globe with a friend. These spheres come with a Greek key motif. Fill with moss for a modern look or go for a shabby chic look. \$100, willarddesign.com



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36" 24"

Adirondack chair

Build a deep-seated outdoor chair from weather-resistant lumber or choose a comfy premade seat from retailers. By ROBERT LITVINOFF • Photography by JILLIAN WARD

reader
request



WHO: Jay Davis
WHERE: Worcester, Mass.
WHAT: Wondering if building an Adirondack chair is a manageable project

Anyone who's ever sat in the low-slung seat of an Adirondack chair and sunk into the curve of the faired back knows there's no cushion-foam seat like a Handy hammock. Jay Davis covered just such a comfy place for his yard but wasn't sure if he should make his own or go shopping. "I thought at first it ought to be easy to build one," he wrote to us, "but looking closely I'm wondering if the angles and curves are too much trouble."

Fear not, Jay. The beauty of the Adirondack chair—which takes its name from the New York recreation camps that snapped up hundreds of the chairs after it was patented in the early 1900s—is its simplicity, as none of the parts do double duty. The hefty seat supports are also the back legs, the wide armrests (perfect for zoning a prime place as cocktail, by the way) also hold the back support. Assembling a basic one will take less than a day, if you follow the plans we show here. But if you decide to go the retail route, there are dozens of richly stained or brightly painted options. Either way, we promise you'll soon be relaxing in the comfort seat in the yard.

more
adirondack style
For chairs, swings, and more at
Woodhouse.com/Amos

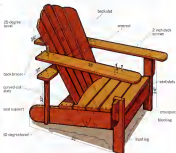


Illustration: Christopher

build it

You can make a roomy, reclining seat with a faired back and wide armrests out of decking lumber

- 1. Assemble the base.** Cut the front legs to length and width. Make the seat supports, which are also the back legs. Round off one end of each seat support and angle the other end. Screw the seat supports together with a topscrew overlapping their angled ends. Attach the front legs to the crosspiece.
- 2. Start the seat.** Cut seat slats the same length as the front crosspiece. Cut a curve into the middle part of one of the slats. Revel this cut to match the incline of the seat back by angling the piece back 10 degrees. Make a corresponding cut in another slat to create a 1/4-inch curved gap between the two that will sandwich the back plate. Screw the rear seat slat to the supports.
- 3. Make the back.** Cut two back braces with the same curve as the rear curved seat slat, but with a 25-degree bevel. Cut one to fit the width of the seat plus the two arms. Cut the other to fit the width of the back. Attach the longer back brace to the top of slat of 2-inch-wide wood, and screw the rest to the side of the back leg.
- 4. Attach the arms.** Cut two arms with a rounded front. Round over the end of an support block and attach it to the outside of each front leg. Screw the arm to the front legs and longer back brace.
- 5. Attach the slats.** Cut back slats with rounded ends. Arrange them in a fan between the arms. Screw the slats to the rear seat slat and back braces, partitioning the shorter brace as high as possible. Screw on the reclining seat slats.



Price: \$60 for pressure-treated decking
Time: 2 hours
Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Calligraphy shows required perfecting angles and curves. But nothing if all together it's simple.

buy it

You can find an array of wide-armed, fair-back Adirondack chairs made from weather-resistant woods and finishes

\$100+ the basic model

The painted backrest is a thoughtful touch. Backrest and armrests are made from the same wood.



\$190+ the mid- range

This Southern Cypress chair is treated with a UV-resistant stain to retain its color. The backrest is assembled with stainless-steel fasteners to prevent rust.



\$340+ the luxury model

Reclining chair with a natural oil finish and high-quality materials and finish. Constructed with a natural oil finish and high-quality materials and finish.



Turn planters into a grilling station

How to create extra storage and work surface from garden accessories and sheet metal

By JENNIFER OLMSTEAD • Photograph by TRIN COTMAN



WHO: Tony DeGangi
WHERE: Wellesley, Mass.
WHAT: Designed a commitment contract to hold off his coffee consumption.

Silver medal winner

coastal waters, they Delvig can occasionally be found on the deck, gobbling snails and limpets for a crowd. "We entertain a lot, and our grill is always smoking," he says. So why the Old Manos asked readers to design their own Hauser Gans Project, they let his inner grill master do the thinking. He came up with a great site for a place to store his cooking tools and his place of food—a car assembled from welded platters and metal-wrapped plywood—and was the first to build in emulation with TGH general contractor Tom Sells. With low-cost materials, hinges, and a few bolts, Sells built a grill that can barbecue hot dogs. The pair built the \$1,000 grill deck, necessary for about \$50, as one Delvig can save made the cooking of fish and put the emphasis back on the snails. "I'm always trying to get the grill marks just right," he confesses.

Cost: \$350
Time: 3 hours
Difficulty: Easy to moderate
Wrapping the metal band
down takes a little perseverance.

HOW IT'S DONE

Build your master list that performs well outside, such as exterior-grade plywood and galvanized sheet metal, hangers, and door seals.

4-10-00
1000 of 10-1
1000

Tip 4: Use a small amount of water to moisten the soil before adding the fertilizer.

Source: author's calculations.

[View all 4 results](#)
[View all 4 results](#)

24. In the
25. In the
26. In the
27. In the

team directly contacts

2. Using the snips, cut three pieces of metal, each 3 inches larger than the top arm's corner. Center each piece of plywood on the metal and trace with a marker. Make a 45-degree relief cut at each corner. Fold the corners over with pliers.

Bend the metal up 90 degrees at the line. Lay the plywood on the metal, clamp it down and wrap the metal around it snugly. Hit it with a hammer and wood block to crease it. Put the metal in place within the hammer down three steps. When the doors are well

3. Turn the planters on their side and fasten them to each other through the center with 2½-inch screws. Center the metal wrapped top over the planters and screw it on from under the bench. Cut two pieces of plywood 1 inch smaller than the doors. Screw these to the back of the doors to cover the cut metal edges. Attach the doors to the planters with strap hinges, and install cabinet catches to hold the doors closed.

4. Secure the handles to the doors and the hooks to the sides of the cabinet. If your planters have a rim, fill the space on the bottom of the cart with a piece of plywood to create a large, flush surface before attaching the locking casters.

get complete instructions
 Follow instructions by step of this project at diyhowto.com/files

get complete
instructions

Followed by a brief stop-by stop of the project at www.broadway.com.

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Paint a floor

Turn a worn floor into a cottage classic with a simple checkerboard pattern

by JENNIFER STIMPSON • Photographs by KYLE GATHE

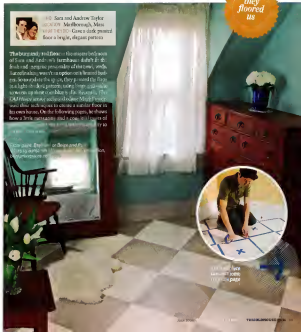


• Sara and Andrew Taylor
• 40, 40 • Marlborough, Mass.
• 1997 • 1997 • Gave a dark green floor a bright, elegant patina

The bright, airy feel of the master bedroom of Sara and Andrew Taylor's farmhouse didn't fit the look and feeling personality of the room, and, unfortunately, wasn't an option on a framed budget. So when the couple moved the large, sunlit bedroom into a large, open space, they were up for a challenge. In the words of the old adage, "It's not what you have, it's how you use it." The Taylor family wanted to create a master bedroom that was a little more rustic and a little more elegant. They wanted a floor that was a little more rustic and a little more elegant. They wanted a floor that was a little more rustic and a little more elegant.

Color paint. Engineer or Design and Paint. It's all about the color and the design. It's all about the color and the design. It's all about the color and the design.

they
floored
us



Paint the floor
with a checkerboard
pattern. See
page 100.

Cost: About \$25 for a 10 by 10-foot room

Time: 3 hours per day

Difficulty: Easy to moderate
Calculating the pattern requires some math, but the paint application is

Day-to-day timeline

FRIDAY Sand and clean the floor; paint the base color

SATURDAY Lay out, tape, and paint the pattern

SUNDAY Apply second coat or polyurethane as needed



Start from the point located from the door and paint inward out of the room

Lightly sand floor before painting

Group the bricks under the door into a pile to keep dust off the wall finish

Mark squares that were first painted with a dot

Tape around the outside of your lines

Leave until second coat

tools you need

180 grit sanding sponge
rental trowel and roller frame
wall extension pole
ruler or yardstick
framing square
putty knife
mini roller frame
2½" high polyester nylon paintbrush

materials to buy

parquet floor paint Starts up to 1,000 sq ft and goes to 1,500 sq ft. One gallon covers 200 square feet. You need enough paint for two coats and one gallon of primer to cover the floor with two coats.

primer's edge Gel tape labeled "delicate" which is the best tacky surface tape (putting the line coat paint underneath)

¼-inch snap ruler

3-inch mini foam roller

water-based polyurethane (optional) for a top coat of added durability. Side finish will look best.

1



1. Prep the base

Remove the paint where the roller and the floor feel bumpy. sand and clean the floor first.

Coating the entire floor using the trowel of the two colors in a base coat creates a clean slate for laying out the pattern and acts as a primer for the darker pattern color.

1. Using a sanding sponge, gently rough up the floor finish and level any high spots from previous staining. Wipe the floor clean with a damp sponge and allow it to dry thoroughly. Cover the spots beneath doors with plastic to prevent dust from blowing in and ruining the wall finish.

2. Prime the base color around the edges of the floor with a 2½" high polyester nylon. Use a small roller, seal the entire floor, starting opposite the door so that you paint yourself out of the room. Let the paint dry completely. It may look lighter, so the floor and apply a second coat. Let the paint dry overnight before laying out the pattern and applying the second color.

2. Measure and mark the pattern

Setting a checker pattern is a diagonal bruno dynamic and makes the room appear bigger. But the pattern will look best if it isn't in perfect half-square triangles at the most visible walls. So figure out which wall is least visible and start measuring on the opposite side of the room. Keep in mind that the painter's tape outlines the box you're painting, so it will fall on alternating sides of the pattern's lines from square to square.

1. Estimate the number of squares you want to fit across the center wall of the three most visible walls. Divide the length of the wall by the number of squares. With this measurement, mark the wall from corner to corner.

2. Find the center point between the first two marks and note the distance from the corner to the center. Using a framing square, draw a perpendicular reference line from the point making it the same length as the distance from the corner to the center point. Then connect the corner to the end of the reference line. This is the side of the first square.

3. Using a straightedge, extend the line out into the room. Mark the entire line of reference to establish the width of the side of each pattern square. Using a framing square as a right-angle guide, complete the square at each mark.

4. Double-check your layout by making sure you connect back to the marks on the first wall. 5. With all the squares drawn, use painter's tape to fill out the squares you do find limited to them. Then tape around the outside edges of the unmarked squares.

6. Cut each piece of tape perfectly by tearing it several gently into. Hold the blade on the tape and rip away from the knife to create a perfect cut and make sharp corners for each square.

7. Seal the tape better floor by applying the putty knife blade over the base to remove air bubbles and prevent paint from bleeding underneath and onto the lighter-colored squares. Continue taping until all the unmarked squares are outlined.

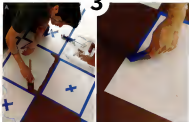
The clean appearance makes with a damp sponge and out of any paint which could damage the freshly painted base coat.

2



3. Paint the pattern

The tape around each square is an excellent guide for painting, but a uneven wood floor is a difficult surface on which to tape. So to help keep paint from bleeding under the tape, cut in the edges of each square with a brush. You can speed up the finish with a roller too. A. Brush a guiding sprayer lightly over the square to lay paint and seal the finish. Then, using a 2 1/2 inch paintbrush, apply paint around the edge of the square. Start each stroke in the top and pull down the square so that the color doesn't push under the edge. Coat the entire perimeter of the square in a way. While the edges are still wet, fill in the field using a mini roller. Roll the paint on in the same direction as the floorboards. Continue painting the squares in this manner until the floor is finished. Clean up any drops or blotches by wiping them up with a damp rag while they're still wet.



B Remove the tape before the paint dries so that it doesn't pull up any color with it. Peel the tape up and away from the paint at an angle following a down edge.

C Porch and floor paint is very durable, but for high-traffic areas consider topping the floor with a coat of polyurethane. After the paint dries for a holiday, use another to apply the finish evenly across the floor. If you plan to add a second coat of paint, lightly sand the first coat before putting the second one down.

Tip The higher the gloss on paint or polyurethane, the more durable it is. If you want the resilience of high-gloss without the shine, put on a top coat of satin polyurethane to tone down the gloss.

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FROM FORGOTTEN TO REFINISHED
NO ONE The Sunburst 2206 house, minus the "renovated" front porch, had been rented for years to groups of college students. AFTER A careful renovation based on the original architect's plan brought back the faded glory—and the house's charm—**OPPOSITE:** Homeowners Dorian and Rhine Walker and their kids, Eric and Evan, did a lot of interesting things, while their special living looked on



Before



MEET THE \$5,000 Winners

TOH READER REMODEL CONTEST 2009

Why they took top honors:
 They used sleuthing, sweat equity,
 and a little pro help to give a
 ramshackle Queen Anne
 spectacular new life

by Dorian Walker, homeowner

Photographs by NATHAN KIRKMAN
 Styling by MEGAN CHAFFIN



We never dreamed we'd end up with this house. Yes, we had moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky, for its small-town lifestyle and loved its rolling down-south views from charming old homes. But Elaine and I had steadily recovered on 1,600 hectares nearby for our film company's office and were happy living in the plantation-style house where we raised our two kids. We were busy with work; Elaine had decided to run for mayor. Another grafting, renovation wasn't on our to-do list.

The trouble was, we had become attached to the house, which we couldn't leave from our office windows. Built in 1896, the scaled-down Queen Anne had its original turret, but lost its grand porch—swapped for an ill-fitting Colonial Revival one in a 1914 renovation. The house had been raised on stilts by kids, and when it went on the market we worried about it being up into apartments. After reading articles of all that we had learned from our previous renovations, we decided to sell our house to save the one. We could live in our offices while making needed repairs.

I assured Elaine that we'd move in before Thanksgiving. I just didn't say which Thanksgiving.

Early on we were forced to find a local blueprint for restoring many original details in a reported 1890s catalog of house plans by George Franklin Barber, a well-known architect at the time. There was one house, Design 23, Plan 2. Now we had a vision complete with porches, starting with the gabled entry porch, its glorious southeast quadrant framing a barrel-vaulted beehive ceiling.

Luckily, the original layout was largely intact, and the inside mainly needed cosmetic work. The front stairs led to four small bedrooms and two baths; downstairs was a front porch, dining room, 1970s powder room, kitchen, and an enclosed back porch. Outside, the original Barber-designed carriage house with long porch



LIBRARY During the house's days as a student rental, the front porch served as a bedroom. Devlin and Elaine turned it into a library, keeping the original painted light and adding custom built-in with the help of a carpenter.

what we did: 1st floor

REMODELING COST: About \$140,000

THE TEAM: Two and a half years

WHERE WE SAVED: With the help of

our kids, we did the demolition

and stripped paint and wallpaper,

and with the help of a pro we

learned to use our new wallpaper,

some of it remains. We swapped

services to get our cabinets, taught

ourselves how to put in flooring

and wallpapering, and bought

lots of salvaged goods.

WHERE WE SPENT: We hired an

architect to design the addition; a

general contractor to build it; and to

replace the heating system, add central A/C, and help update plumbing and wiring, and a carpenter to help re-create our 1890s porch and build bookcases for the library. **FLOOR PLANS:** The original layout largely stayed the same, although a porch became the library, and a back bedroom and back porch came down to make room for the addition, which has a family room, nook, and garage downstairs, plus a master suite and rental apartment upstairs.



© 2009 TONY READER REMODEL CONTEST



FRONT ENTRY With the original house plans as a guide, the owners uncovered a historic window buried in plaster. A wallpaper pro worked with an A. Art and hand and wheel packs helped them place together the 12 patterns in the foyer. They spent over 100 hours refinishing the door.

At first the house seemed plenty big for us, but with no family room, no garage, and no master beds, we soon decided to add on. By taping off the back bedroom and back porch, we figured we could fit an addition that would hold a family room and garage downstairs, with a master suite and a rental apartment above to offset costs. We brought in a local architect to work out the addition, based on a Barber carriage-house plan. The general contractor who built it also helped update the heating, wiring, and plumbing in the house, and he added central AC. We found a carpenter to reproduce Barber's pivots, using lockery-made millwork, and a paint consultant who could put together a period-appropriate palette.

The left plenty of work hours—and our son, five, and daughter, nine, who were home from college on summer break when we began work. So far, Evan was accumulating up working one hour to scrape paint, while Ben set up made to strip wallpaper and repair plaster.

As the house's original elegance emerged, we became particularly attached to the front parlor. Reaching it would be the perfect place to cut up with a book, we added shelves and raised the fireplace to working order.

The kitchen, which was heavily garaged as the addition was grafted on, ended up being our biggest remodeling project. By the time we were done, I had learned how to make cabinet doors, and Elaine had learned putting down hexagonal ceramic tile flooring.

We knew custom millwork would cost a fortune, so we scoured architectural salvage shops for the back-story in bar-trade, hardwoods, flooring, and French doors for the new spaces. Armed with every dimension at all times, I found a window frame once too-large to fit that became the surround for a wooden cabinet under the porch ceiling and the missing stained glass for a window in a nook.

Our lowest moment came 22 months into the code, when we were adding tin to the kitchen ceiling and found pins above it sagging half a foot under a 6000-pound clear-front rail. It seemed like we'd never finish.

We were in by Thanksgiving, as promised—just three years later—and three years after that we are still adding finishing touches. Elaine now sees them as repairs, and I've become an remodeling procrastinator. We also have our perfect empty seat. Only problem is, from my favorite chair in the library I can see a window house we've taken on directly across the street. It's an 1800s house, and it needs a lot of work. ■

DINING ROOM
The fireplace was restored and refinished, adding a graceful arch to a room "back dated" with period-style wallpaper.



PAGE THROUGH

The homeowners left a convenient opening between the dining room and kitchen, framing it with iron salvaged from another room.

BACKSTAGE The Eastlake-style built-in case houses a large stage. Owner built the doors for this built-in. Elaine installed metal chair-docking seats for the glass fronts. The built-in's metal supports were made with lumber milled from a tree in the backyard.



KITCHEN A view of the 27th- and 28th-century range houses the starting point for a vintage-style kitchen with marble counters, a two-color subway tile backsplash, and a built-in metal range. The metal was brought in from a nearby factory.



MAVERICKS The extra-wide upstairs bedroom in the addition has a vaulted ceiling and an 18x24 Gothic window, which the owners found online. They salvaged the doors and hardware from a local hardware store.

FRONT PORCH Using the original 1860 house plan, the owners rebuilt the porch, which features redwood siding and is in the original Bayview style in a 1914 renovation. The colors here are based on a traditional Victorian palette.



ADDITION Used an extra-wide house designed by the owner's original architect. The addition has a garage attached via a different opening that makes 19th-century carriage look like. The bay is part of a rental apartment put in to help pay costs.



The Walkers' top tips for tackling a period fixer-upper



1. Lock for savings when you can. We

1981 love Borden & Borden wallpaper—it's hand printed based on historic patterns. But a roll can cost \$200. So we chose a family of patterners like called Ang & Japanese and asked the company to send us a lot of "overage" designed for the surplus bin. We custom ordered some wallpaper but were able to purchase many at a better half off.

2. Burton, Doran wanted to build our cabinets but wasn't how so now that he's known around town as a general contractor. He traded services with a local high school woodworking student's uncle computer assisted program to design the cabinets, then built the frames. In return, Doran gave us a lot of advice on local Victorian architecture.



3. Scout for salvaged goods. Salvage and reuse

played a huge role throughout our renovation and helped keep the cost of our kitchen below \$7,500. We wanted something with us at all times and kept our eyes open. We found Corbin's marble pieces for the counters in a salvage shop and bought the working circa 1920 Peninsula stove for \$250 after seeing it someone's garage. A nearby hardware provided us with the kitchen's sheet-plate flooring, and we cut the pumice for the cobble's glass fronts out of old windows. Much of the brass used for the dining chairs from a friend at town who was moving and had leftovers. That helped keep the cost of the dining to about \$425.



LEFT Elaine is on the painting job of the painting and woodwork, saving the fire-damaged Victorian one doors and trim re-arrange.

NEEDS After acquiring a professional papering or to the existing. Don't have time to use rain or weather.

RIGHT As an architect was drawing up plans for the addition, Burton will mostly not all learn over the better picture how the old connect to the right house.



4. Turn to pros at critical junctures. We've

revisited other homes and like to think we have a pretty good sense of color, but we knew we needed someone to come to the exterior palette because so many different architectural elements were involved. For about \$500, we consulted with a local architect on the 12 colors you see along with a paint-by-numbers scheme.

5. Stay true to your vision. There

are so many times during renovation when it would be easier to just make do with something readily available. But we learned how satisfying it can be to walk down the road thing. We started with books and magazines devoted to historic architecture and also drew from the Web. Then we found a regional catalog of designs by the Victorian architect George Franklin Barker. At first we didn't recognize our house since the front was so drastically changed, but we reached out to a professional historian and through word of mouth found an expert in Franklin Barker—Barker's home base—who confirmed that our house was in fact Barker's "Design 22 Plan 2." That single connection guided much of our work.



dozens of victorians

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PHOTO: MICHAEL PUGH AND LARRY



[Before]

before The farmhouse kitchen was dimly lit and in a great way. After the cabinets were repainted, rearranged, and made to look better, bright light is a welcome sight.

best
kitchen
redo

\$1,000 REMODEL



frugal
beauty



WINNERS: Alina
Moore-Riggs and
Bradley Egan
11000 Kalamazoo,
MI 49001

WHAT THEY DID: Remodeled a kitchen in a formerly abandoned farmhouse for roughly \$100,000. The kitchen was a mess, with a confusing storage look while utilizing the 1980s cabinets—making some smokes hiding out in one wall.

THE RESULT: "We didn't think the factory cabinets a real value for our money, and when we saw a remodel was a high priority, I had big dreams, but Bradley and I both knew we had to do everything on the cheap. So we started and made painted the cabinets and added a rustic-style finish. We topped the base cabinets with cherry butcher block and used 12-inch boards covered with molding to make the upper cabinets look ceiling-height. Every weekend for 11 months we worked on this and, of course, learning as we went along and buying for help from others. My brother-in-law took the cabinets that we did just about everything. We even made the range hood and a sink rack, a through a metal bar made the range hood splash, the sink, and a new top for a old table we had, turning it into an island. Now the kitchen's a paradise, with no smokes!"

best bath redo

SLUO PRINCE



artistic whitewash



WINNERS: Laura Cooper and Douglas Kaestner (TLC—Cleveland) Highland, Ohio
WHAT THEY DID: Gave their 1990s-style bath a fresh look
WHY THEY DID: Saved a leaky pipe and proved that even first-time DIYers can redo a room without breaking the bank
THEIR STORY: "We're artists, but the pink tile in the bath of our 1920s Dutch Colonial (Renov) was too leaky even for us. After sifting through design books and magazines, Benjamin and I decided we wanted period details but with modern touches and a clean palette, and without making the space feel too clinical. Our major renovating experience was up, and our bank account wasn't much better. So, using the Web and how-to books, we made a careful plan and a careful

budget that included keeping the floor, tub, and toilet, which were original to the house. All that just needed a little TLC, though the toilet repair left us asking, 'what a pipe blow! Having no idea how bad it would be, we cut out the pink tile and put up white subway tile and beadboard. We made the vanity and open shelves ourselves, the period molding and even the rip on the toilet tank came from a Habitat for Humanity resale store. For a final touch, we put out some picture frames (painted red) and used them to hold off the vintage print girl postcard, my grandmother used to collect. Maybe it was Benjamin's luck, but we finished in about a month, without fail. Okay, we had to go a few days without showering—but we got an awesome bathroom."



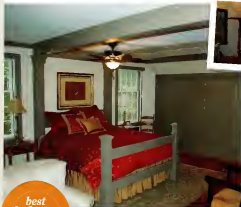
(before)

before the Pepto-pink tile tiles I paint the kind of white, after White subway tile, try the paint, and open shelves updated the bath at a cost of only \$1,400



best bedroom redo

SLUO PRINCE



(before)

before The existing space had a lot of clutter, but it could be transformed into a bedroom. The owners merged the room and added support beams, built in a headboard and a built-in bed



empty-nest makeover



WINNERS: Jim and Diane Newman (TLC—Newport, Co.)
WHAT THEY DID: Turned over the old bedroom into a vintage-style master bedroom
WHY THEY DID: Did all their own design and carpentry and wanted to support beams—on their shoulders
THEIR STORY: "We always wanted a larger bedroom, with a new bed and more storage, as a style that would be a solid home. With the kids grown, we were able to combine two bedrooms. It helped that I studied art and my husband taught shop. For inspiration I used magazine clippings, in fact, I got the idea for the new bed from The Old House. The wall we took down was

load bearing, and the hardest thing we did—and maybe the easiest—was raise two new support beams using ladders and a chain hoisted over the attic joists. Installing the new flooring was 'an adventure,' as Jim put it. He prepped a car jack against a temporary floor cleat to push the bow out of subfloor planks as he nailed them down. We spent 10 months at hard labor, and it's ironic we didn't tell each other that we got a progress room—until a window. I bought a painting to hang over the bed and found one after doing research that it was worth a lot more than I paid for it. We sold it, and the \$6,000 profit covered the cost of all our materials (and a new painting!)"

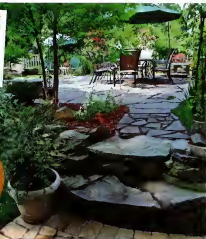
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before The sloped backyard was the opposite of inviting. After Montaine repaved the drive, installed landscaped patios, and added marble fountains and plants, the dedication

**best
backyard
redo**

CLASS WINNER



stepped up with stone



WINNER Paul Lindner
FROM LEXINGTON, N.J.
WHAT HE DID: Turned his family's sloping backyard into a gathering place, complete with a 400-square-foot bluestone patio. **BEFORE** Lindner and his wife loved the yard and built the patio, all for about \$5,000, and installed a bluestone delivery system using a plywood path and his daughter's skateboard.

AFTER Lindner: "We love to entertain, but our backyard was no place for a party. We wanted something with good planning and a place to relax. I didn't have much experience, so I studied magazines like *The Old House*, where I found an organically shaped, broken-bluestone patio with steps on two sides like the one I wanted. Then I talked to contractors and people at stone yards in England to get the design. After getting estimates as high as \$10,000, I became my own general contractor—and believe it or not, the hardest part was leveling the yard. It got 10 tons of soil, cheap, from a contractor who wanted to get rid of it.

His crew moved it around the yard with small excavators, but I finished the job with more wheelbarrow loads than I could count. Some of the money I saved went toward exotic trees and plants, like Japanese maples, a river birch, copper poppies, and blackberry lilies. It took about four months, working mornings, nights, and weekends, and I finished just in time for our daughter's birthday party. It was hard work but fun, and it all proves that a regular guy can do the job, and on a limited budget, too."

**best
exterior
redo**

CLASS WINNER



balancing act

WINNERS Mary Kay and Pat McPhillips
FROM ELLENBURG, Wash.
WHAT THEY DID:

Renovated the front of their 1920s house, adding a porch and some true Arts and Crafts style.

BEFORE The house was in need of authentic architectural details, and after their 25th anniversary party, they

AFTER The house was in need of authentic architectural details, and after their 25th anniversary party, they decided to add a deep front porch, square pillars, a cantabed front door, and a clad roof. Two contractors, working together, enclosed the existing entry porch, built the new framework, put up fiber-cement siding, and installed a glass-paned door that mimics the house's original windows. Then Pat took over. He's pretty much self-taught but very methodical. He laid the composite decking for the porch floor, put up stone veneer, built the stairs, and painted the railings. My job was cleanup and landscaping. We worked for three months, almost nonstop. Now we love sitting on the porch with friends—and Pat is so relaxed, he's started working on the back."

before The front facade was bland and unexciting. After a partial-inspired redo brought in a full porch with square pillars and an earth-tone palette



before



THE Moxie Awards

As your stories rolled in to our Reader Remodel Contest, one thing became very apparent: When it comes to home-owning chutzpah, no one is close to *TOH* readers. And a handful of you went above and beyond the call of DIY duty, earning our respect, our admiration, and one of our first-ever **Moxie Awards**. We suggest bookmarking these extraordinary tales for the next time you feel you've hit a wall—or a tropical storm hits you (like one did California homeowner Ed Serafino). That way you can talk through to find a reminder that where there's a will—and perhaps a truck that can survive logging 67,466 miles in three years (like New Hampshire resident John Hathaway's)—there's a way. **BY NICKALIE ROSENBERG**



long-distance champ

WINNER: John Hathaway
FROM: North Stamford, N.Y.
MOXIE MEASURE: When John brought us his story about restoring a haunted Queen Anne (only two of its 23 rooms were gutted) in rural New Hampshire, he was thinking of a future when he and his family could own a bed-and-breakfast there. First, for a contractor like himself, bringing back the historical charm that had been stripped away over the years was a daunting task—one made even more so by the fact that John and his family lived seven hours and four states away, in New Jersey. John has logged over 10 round trips and 67,466 miles (that's two and a half times around the globe!) in the past three years (including back his Victorian-era beauty.

first-place persistence

WINNER: Chasid Haylett and Philip Jones
FROM: Somerset, N.J.
MOXIE MEASURE: It takes giving up their free time,

including time nights, for a cumulative seven months, working past and past in the driveway, and chipping away at tile and vinyl flooring for weeks. But this young married couple decided that taking on the giant work in their backroom and kitchen remodels was worth saving nearly \$13,000. With DIY tools in hand, Philip drilled and resealed the kitchen while Chasid painted the space three times in two days to be ready for the cabinet installation.



bathroom black belt

WINNER: Dave Kofman, FROM: Sharpshurg, Ga.
MOXIE MEASURE: More folks would run to the nearest contractor after causing a flood so bad they had to call 911 and their insurance company on the first day of the project. Not Dave. After having a water line and seeing his bathroom turn into Niagara Falls, flooding his new home and ruining wall-board belongings before, Dave (despite his wife's objections) was determined to finish the remodel on his own. Now the couple have their master-at-tilt, Mediterranean-style men master bath—radius waterfall not included.

biggest heart

WINNER: David and Becky Brett
FROM: Chardon, Ohio
MOXIE MEASURE: Taking on a condemned 1850s home, David and Becky spent two years renovating the building, doing 80 percent of the work themselves. The goal of all their hard work to make a home not just for their growing family but also for local teenage girls who have aged out of foster care. Their family lives on one side of the house and the girls have their own apartment on the other. And in the middle? Libraries, art rooms, and an indoor trampoline where everyone can let loose and have some fun.

four-star sequel

WINNER: Mike Fletcher and Chantal Covert
FROM: Silver Spring, Md.
MOXIE MEASURE: After extensively remodeling their first house, in a New York brownstone, Mike and Chantal moved to pack away their toolboxes and never take in a big, life-changing project again. But, boy, did they break that promise. To remodel their new house, a 1914 Cape, Mike installed the National Electrical Code for water to pass a test and pull his own permits, saving \$15,000, accomplished the asphalt driveway, hauled in more than 30,000 pounds of more dirt in five trips and installed, with the help of a neighbor, 1,800 square feet of flagstone for a new patio.

best elbow grease

WINNER: Laura W., FROM: Columbia, Ill.
MOXIE MEASURE: Laura wanted something special for her powder room floor. And when she couldn't find what she wanted in any store, she decided to make it herself! Wrapping the help of her husband, sister, and brother-in-law, she tore down a 100-year-old floor for a local family in exchange for keeping the lumber. Then, with her sister's aid, Laura cut thick, block-pattern slices from the salvaged oak rafters. They stained and stained each one by hand before gluing and sealing them in place. Now, unleashing your own old-school compulsion to match the new wood inlays.

hospital-bed hurdle jumper

WINNER: Ed and Jean Serafino
FROM: Newark, Calif.
MOXIE MEASURE: You know it's remodel or bust when you're managing a slaphappy crew of family and friends to finish the job—from your hospital bed! That's what Ed did for three weeks after a 125-degree fever and infection left him bedridden right before a scheduled joint replacement. It was just one of a series of setbacks that he and wife Jean overcame to save a 1903 Queen Anne in danger of being razed. They had to find a new pro after their first contractor was jailed for drunk driving, Ed Nife—original architect—died from prostate cancer, flooding the interior, and their funds ran out before the new contractor could finish. Where others would have given up, Ed and Jean persevered to finish the job.



33 CLEVER, TIME-SAVING, MONEY-SAVING READER TIPS



To be perfectly honest, when we asked you all to contribute your best DIY trade secrets to this, our annual Reader-Created Issue, we figured we'd get one or two ah-ha/head-slappers from you and a whole bunch of other tips we'd heard before. But man, were we wrong. And man, oh man, do our heads hurt. From the tricks you use to speed up ripens, to the tools you fabricate when the right one is unavailable, to the way you stretch money by repurposing it: Home materials, your ideas left a lot of red handprints on a list of reds all around here. Yup, you're smart people, and for that we're glad to know you. We're glad to know the tips on the following pages, too. You'll want to check 'em all out, but only after reading our own tips that on some soft gloves first.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TINA GREENE STYLING BY BRICE CAVALIERE

FIX IT OUTSIDE



1) Fix a flat tire
My old wheelbarrow had a flat, but the bolts were rusted and the replacement was expensive. So I drilled a hole in the tire and sprayed expanding foam insulation inside and it was full! This fix won't last forever, but it's made it through one season so far. —Art Pigeonpoker, Washington, NY

2) Left out rats

When a truck left deep tire marks in my yard, instead of filling them in with soil and seed, I filled the soil with a spading fork. I gave the grass a small lift every other day, and after two weeks the tire marks were gone. —Leslie Spensler, Grove City, Ohio

3) Hang the house

Rather than try our garden house flat on the grass, I took a heavy-duty 105-inch plastic pot and screwed it to a stud with a washer and lag bolt. Then I coated the base around it. The pot's tapered shape kept the house mostly in place. —Bull Doggie, Bowling Green, Ohio

4) Scrape with a wrench

I remove the scale from my car using a wrench aimed to fit tightly over the hub. Drapping it up, down, or around to remove the larger blisters does a lot of standing time on. —Mike Stoenberg, West Haven, Conn.



5) Cut the sprayer

When I'm out spraying for weeds with my plastic pump sprayer, I use an old golf bag cut to what is around. The cut's circular base is a perfect fit for the sprayer's tank, and its bag wheels were made for lawn. —Richard P. Stiggle, Va.

6) Trap wasp nests

Rather than try to knock off wasp nests under the eaves while standing

on a ladder, I take a long plastic downspout, attach a plastic bag to one end with a rubber band, and squirt a shot of flying insect spray into the other end. Then I place that end over the nest and scoot the pipe sideways to dislodge it. The nest and any wasps fall down the pipe and into the bag for disposal. —Devin Conrad, Sacramento, Calif.

RAID THE KITCHEN

7) Carton for the hardware

Keeping small parts organized when repairing an item is as easy as making breakfast. I use empty egg cartons to group and contain the parts. —David Kirby, Douglas, Mass.

8) Stick it to graft

My husband and I discovered that the flat end of a chopstick was the best for removing extra graft from the joints. —Allen Lopez, Rocky River, Ohio



9) Stop water with bread

I'd cut some water lines under the sink, but a valve got stuck and they kept leaking a steady dribble of water, which prevented me from soldering. The plumber I called in (at emergency rates) asked for a slice of bread. We saw off the crust, rolled it up, and stuck it inside the hole. It stopped the flow long enough for him to solder the pipe before it dissolved and washed away. This tip cost me \$130 and a slice of bread. —Jerry Schlegel, Indianapolis

10) Curve installation

I use an electric carving knife instead of a utility knife to slice evenly through fiberglass heat insulation, so hand cutting was less needed. —Patrick Schmeckler, Columbus, Ind.

11) Find the belts

When replacing a roller, the hardest part is to line up the belt with the short belts in the floor without touching the wax ring. So I took

plastic straws on the ends of the belts in the garden and set the roller down perfectly on one (go without missing any the wax ring). —Ed Carlson, Charlotte, N.C.

12) Get a good hold

When you're driving hard-on-cars across with a manual sawed drive, get on a rubber ladder glove and you'll get a no-slip grip. —Pamela Pelt, Mount Vernon, Ga.



13

PAINT LIKE A PRO



13) Paper the windows

When painting wood windows and sills in a humid climate like we have here in the Deep South, leave the windows open to dry for a day, then put waxed paper across that sill and close the sash. The paint will cure without sticking. —Celia Gray Goffard, Miss.

14) Mask off the floor

Before you roll down that molding in the basement, get a strip of painter's paper between the cording and the floor. Then you won't have



16

to tape off the floor when you paint. After you're done, cut off the paper. No one will ever know it's there. —Mark Stevenson, Philadelphia

15] Note the paint color
Keep the paint can for each room handy by writing each name on a piece of tape and tucking it behind the light switch cover plate. —Robert Recko, Green Lake, Wis.

16] Bag the paint tray
Put your roller tray inside a dishtowel, kitchen towel bag, and pull the strings tight, then pour the paint into the tray to reuse. After painting, turn the bag inside out so that the paint is inside. Pull the strings and throw the bag away. The tray is clean and ready for a next color. —Justin Waller, Richmond, Va.

17] Seal wall holes
Before you spackle and holes, cut a

corner on one half and push it into the hole, seal and fire. For larger holes, fold the ends in half and use it all. Then trim the excess and spackle. You won't need to go back for a second pass. —George Martin, New Bedford, Mass.

18] Smooth with a roller
When I repaired a cracked ceiling, I waited until the joint compound was barely set up and used a dry paint roller to smooth out the lumpy areas. A damp sponge got rid of any sandpaper roughness after the compound dried, so no sandpaper need to dust. —Ann McNamara, Brooklyn, NY

CLEAN UP WITH EASE

19] Catch dust with a basketball
I had to drill holes for cat lights in the ceiling, so I cut myself beneath it to help to collect the dust. A 14-inch hole drilled into the basket allowed

the ball to fit between the drill and the hole saw. Then I held the drill with one hand and the ball right to the ceiling. No dust fell in any face or on my floors. —David Kishel, St. Pete Beach, Fla.

20] Launder greasy hands
After handling gassy pipes or yard equipment, wash up with liquid laundry detergent. It cuts oil better than ordinary bar soap and costs less than specialty hand cleanser. —Matthew Ryan, St. Paul, Minn.

21] Remove paint with oil
I've used acetone or corn oil rather than mineral spirits to clean oil-based paint off my skin. It works great, washes off with soap and water, and moisturizes my hands, too. —Gregory G. Bell, Duluth, Minn.

SAVE TIME

22] Cut with two blades
It's hard to tear a hole in a hole or not without jamming off your line. Solution: Put two blades on your bucket wrench, with the teeth pointing in opposite directions. Not only will your saw stay on its line, but it will also cut faster, on both the pull and the push strokes. —Walter Chomars, Portland, Me.

20



23] Find tools in a flash
Stick a reflective reflective tape onto tool handles, oil

plumbers, or other small items that are easy to misplace. You'll be able to find them by shining a flashlight around your work area. —Allen Peterson, Model, Minn.

24] Locate studs first
A contractor at my work place uses an inexpensive stud finder made by tying a string to a cow magnet, the really powerful kind that's held to cattle to keep barbed wire and other metal out of their systems. You dangle the magnet next to the wall and it sticks to any nearby nails or screws. —Marie Clark, Baltimore

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

25] Drill with a bit off the clothes rack
You don't have to buy a faster bit to probe walls and ceilings. Just whip an S-hook piece off a wire coat hanger with a wire cutter. Then use end as a 60-degree angle and chuck the other end in your drill. The wire will work its way through wood or drywall in no time. —Larry K. Stark, Pa.

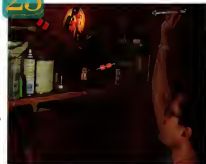
26] Shoulder the switch
If the light switch for your basement is on a sidewalk, install the switch upside down so that down is out. When you head downstairs with a load of laundry in your arms, just lean against the switch with your shoulders to turn on the lights. —Doug Jones, Sayreville, N.J.

27] Fill holes with herbs
After I took out old moldings, I filled the gaps holes in the floor with the handles of my son's old wooden hand saws. I simply pushed each handle down a hole until it wedged in place, then traced a line over with

the floor. I made a cut just above the nails, tapped the pieces into place with some wood glue, and covered the floor with carpeting. —Jesse Morris, Wilbury, Mass.

28] Stop dropping screws
In tight spots, keep screws from falling off your screwdriver with a piece of plastic wrap. Push the screw point through the wrap, then hold it tight as you turn the screwdriver. Pull away the plastic when you're done. —Jesse A. Thomson, Tampa, Fla.

23



29] Plug holes with tees
To fill a missing screw hole in a door, glue a wood golf tee in the hole. Cut off the excess when the glue dries. —Ed Reinhardt, Albany, La.

30] Unclog hairy drains
After our bathtub became clogged with dog hair, I tried the drain but without success. So my wife gave it a spray of Nair hair remover. Filthier masses later the drain worked better than it had in months! —Craig Brownstein, Monaca, Calif.

31] Oil your nails
Before hammering a nail into hard wood, rub it over your nose. The oil it picks up makes it easy to drive. —Sean Moriarty, Guilford, Conn.

32] Quiet water pipes
My annoying upstairs neighbor covered the pipe inside the wall to reduce the noise. After that was up the wall, I drilled small holes through the wall around the pipe and shot a bit of spray foam

into each one. When the foam hardened, the noise dropped out. —Stephen Knecht, New London, Conn.

33] Bag the joint compound
Lacking the talent to spread joint compound evenly in corners, I made a disposable putty bag. I took a plastic bag and reinforced a corner with duct tape. After putting in some compound and twisting the open end closed, I clipped the corner, squeezed out an even bead, then smoothed it with my finger. —Rick M., Knoxville, Tenn.

▶
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a great
idea?
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tips with us at
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ALL ABOUT

Lawns

TOH readers told us they wanted to know how to grow a dense, healthy carpet of grass. So we fired up the experts to help you choose the right turf and the best way get the greenest lawn in the neighborhood. *By Sal Voelker*

Why do we love our lawns? Perhaps the reason is rooted in childhood memories of running barefoot through freshly cut grass, feeling the tickle of cool blades, and inhaling the clean, slightly soapy scent. Or maybe it's the way well-maintained turf sets off a house, like a tailored tuxedo might any man. (Realtors report that a nice lawn can bump up a house's value by nearly 20 percent.)

Whatever the reason, we invest a lot of time and money in the care of our lawns—about \$40 billion a year—in the form of fertilizers, weed and pest controls, and yard-care equipment. But buying stuff is no help if having a lush lawn isn't the same as actually knowing how to grow one. Most of us pick up our yard-care habits in bits and pieces—by watching Dad, emulating our neighbors, or talking to garden-aide clerks at the home center. And if that doesn't work, well, let a lawn service take care of it.

Here's a less expensive suggestion: Follow the advice in this grass-growing guide and become your own lawn-care expert. We've tapped authorities such as *The Old House* landscape contractor Roger Cook, Dr. Bruce Aquino, chief agronomist at Scotts, Kevin Morris at the National Turfgrass Federation, and regional lawn advocate Paul Tubay. From there you'll learn the fundamentals—what grass is best for your area, how to plant it, when to mow it, how much to water it, and what you need to do at each stage of the growing season. Who knows—by a year or two you could be strolling barefoot through your own thick carpet of turf, feeling that old familiar tickle on your toes.

voted
favorite
topic

anatomy of grass

Each 1,000-square-foot of healthy lawn contains about a million plants.

blade
Manufactured
tensile strength. Cut
often to maintain
one-third of entire

sheath
Protects and
supports the base
of the blade

rhizome
Gather rhizomes and
water from the soil.
Rhizomes grow
deeper by forcing
the blades around
3 inches deep



watering causes it
to break down, plus
it's a waste of money
to overwater.

VITALS

Cost to install
Seed: Starter \$10-\$50 per 1,000 square feet
Hydroseeding: Hire a pro to spray seed, fertilizer and mulch for \$80 to \$100
Plugs: Plant chunks of warm-season grasses for \$100 to \$150
Sod: Lay for \$300 to \$500
Cost to maintain
Lawn service: Apply fertilizers, control weeds and pests for \$400 to \$600 per 1,000 square feet a season
DIY: Two to three hours of labor a season plus \$150 to \$700 in supplies.



How much water?
Figure about 1 inch a week. To fix a patch or bare, some grasses need more, some less.

How much sun?
Lawn is best with at least four hours of direct sun a day. Plant groundcover flowers that bloom less than two hours.



When to mow
When grass is at least 3½ inches high. Tall turf needs less water, discourages weeds and develops deep drought-resistant roots.

• Our cast of veteran experts



TOM SILVA
General Contractor



NOLAN KORMAN
Master Carpenter



HOWARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Hardscape Expert



ROGER COOK
Landscape Contractor



KERWIN CORBETT
Painter

I have an outdoor fountain that I'd like to put in a new location beyond the reach of the electric supply. Can I convert the pump to work on solar power instead?

—BARBARA GARRISON, ST. HELENS ISLAND, DC



Fountains like this can still work in remote locations if the water pump is solar powered.

Roger Cook replies: It's technically possible, but you'll end up with a less efficient pump than one made for such a purpose. I'd recommend that you replace your old pump with one specifically designed to be powered by solar cells. Just make sure it has the same gallons-per-minute rating as the old one to ensure proper water flow.

Keep in mind that a solar-powered pump's output fluctuates with the sun's brightness. Flow will fall off if a cloud passes overhead or the sun sinks behind a tree, and there may not be any power at all on cloudy days. The only way to keep the finest art running without any fluctuations is to get a pump with a backup battery.

Q LEAKING DORMER

I have leaks in the flat roof areas in front of each of my dormer windows. Is there any way to stop these leaks without tipping out the roofing, which is only a year old?

—CHUCK DANIEL, BOSTON CITY, OH

Tom Silva replies: Did the leaks start right after the new roofing was installed? If so, trace the leaks back to fix it. If that's not an option, you could try brushing on a thick, clear liquid sealant like Gaco's Pro Flex. Unlike coating it, it's clear and doesn't get hard and crack. Per has great luck using it in cases like yours. Apply it over the flat roof and continue up and over the coping flashing. The roof

is compatible with many materials, including asphalt, aluminum, and galvanized steel.

If that doesn't work, then your next best option is to replace the existing flashing and install an EPDM membrane over the flat areas. This synthetic rubber is very durable—most products have 30-year warranties—but it's not like EPDM. Hire a roofer who has experience installing it.

Q RUSTY WATER

We have a frustrating problem with rust in our well water. Sometimes it shows up, but sometimes the water stays clear. How can we make the water clear all the time?

—CHRISTOPHER ALTON, NEW NH

Richard Trethewey replies: If the rust is coming through in the form of small flakes, a standard particulate filter will catch them before they reach the beautiful system. The filter sits in a container located between the pressure tank and the main supply line. It's a relatively inexpensive device that will also catch sand, sediment, and other particulates. You just have to remember to replace the filter regularly.

But if the rust is dispersed in the water and making it cloudy, the fix is more involved. The first step is to have your water tested by a state-certified lab to determine how severe the problem is. You can find the lab in your state by going to epa.gov/infocenter. This work with a plumber who's familiar with the well water in your area to find an effective water treatment strategy. To find out what your options are, visit the Water Quality Association's website at www.wqa.org. A water softener might help, but the best way to get rid of iron is with an oxidizing iron treatment system, which uses an oxidizing agent like hydrogen peroxide or ozone to make the iron particles clump together so that they can be filtered out.

WHAT IS IT?



A-1 Rabbie

two master

A-1 Temporary

drain plug

C-1 Kitchens

also show

D-1 Di...

FOR MORE

DETAILED



When a window unit is badly damaged, North Adams says it's often easier to order a custom replacement than to try repairing it.

Q BOUNCEL DAMAGE

One day a squirrel got into our living room through our chimney, then tried to chew through four different windows and attempt to escape. We'd rather not replace the windows. Is there any way to repair the damage?

—NATHAN VANDERHART, CHANDLER, MD, MA

Nolan Korman replies: Wow—that's quite a mess! And a good reminder to have your roof checked for any chimney damage.

The only way to repair such damage is to replace the windows. The next way you'd fix a rotten one—with an architectural epoxy filler. It's a lot more expensive than standard wood glue, but I don't think epoxy would hold up very well in this application.

Even so, the case of epoxy is more complicated: the filler and putty you need to shape to match your damaged windows. You'll have to take out each sash, scrape and sand the wood, mask off the glass, and then sculpt the

filler along each edge using a plastic spreader shaped to match the old sash profile. After the filler cures, you'll have some sanding. There's no learning curve to working with epoxy, so start with the least visible window. You don't want your first efforts to be as the most noticeable place.

Frankly, before deciding to repair the damage, I'd recommend getting a millwork shop or a wood-window maker to construct new, matching sashes. It will cost much more than epoxy, but I think you'll be happier with the results in the long run.



This is what happens when a single sash is replaced. Trapped between the new frame and the old one, the sash is damaged.

STRIP PAINT OFF BRICK

Is there a way to remove the paint that the previous owners slapped on the brick siding around our garage door? We tried a wire brush but that did nothing.

—JANETSONE@LIVE.LINKEDIN.COM

Kevin O'Connor replies: Wire brushing sometimes works to remove paint, but you have to be careful because it can damage some older, softer brick. Charles Clark Jr., senior director of engineering services at the Brick Industry Association, tells me you'd probably have better luck using a chemical paint remover, as long as it specifically says on the label that it's suited for use on masonry. The wrong types of removers will actually stain some brick. Look for a scraper that does not contain ethylene glycol and has a thick, gel-like consistency, such as Prosoak's Sol-Snap. This type of product sticks to vertical surfaces, dissolves acrylic or oil-based paints, and rinses off with water. And a thick gel will be easy to keep away from the painted wood surfaces that you don't want to strip.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

WEEDS IN GRAVEL DRIVEWAY

We have a driveway and parking area covered with gravel that weeds are constantly growing through. We've tried spraying with herbicides, but they keep coming back. Would it help to put landscape fabric under it?

—ANALISA@JANETSONE.COM

Proger Cook replies: Perhaps, but it depends on the type of weeds you're battling. Pull one up and take a look. If it has a long, deep root, a landscape fabric won't stop it. But if the weed has a small, scattered root system that goes only a couple of inches deep, it would grow just flat at the gravel on top of the fabric. So even if you save on top of all the expense of removing the gravel, laying down a heavy geotextile is less—the stuff made by Proger is much more durable than landscape

I want to move a small tree temporarily while we build an addition, then replant it when the work is done. How should I go about it?

—MATTHEW@ARCO.HENRYDAVE.COM

Kimberly Hines of Groundworks Landscaping replies: A successful transplant, temporary or not, depends on having an intact root ball of sufficient size—about 11 times the trunk's diameter. If the trunk is more than 36 inches across, call in a professional landscaper because of the weight involved. Once the tree is dug up, its roots get wrapped to help and rewire to hold the soil.

Cost: \$20 for the largest trees.
Time: 2 hours.
Difficulty: Moderate to difficult, depending on the size of the tree.

The tree can then be transported and kept alive until replanting time. To fit up the 18-inch-diameter ball shown above, we used a 42-by-42-inch piece of new-ply burlap and about 4 yards of mulch twine, both available at garden stores. Keep for a tree that small, the work is much easier with two people. It's important to tie the burlap and twine tightly around the ball, but take care not to rub them against the trunk because you can easily damage the young tree's delicate bark.

Properly wrapped and regularly watered, a tree will easily survive for months out of the ground, until you're ready to plant it in place.

STEP-BY-STEP Wrap a root ball

1. Dig out the root ball

Use a shovel to dig a circle in the ground around the tree that is as deep as the trunk and 22 times the trunk's diameter. Outside this circle, dig a wide trench. Keep digging until you stop encountering roots. Wrap the twine under the ball at a shallow angle to make it a flat. Carefully lift the burlap under the ball, grip the twine, and lift the tree out of its hole.



2. Wrap the roots

Position the root ball in the center of the burlap and gently lift it to opposite corners. Use a sawtooth knife to separate the sides together as tightly as you can seal the twine. Do the same with the burlap at other two tree corners.



3. Truss with twine

To secure all twine heavily to the trunk, the twine is wrapped vertically around the ball. Tilt the tree gently so that twine goes across under the ball's bottom. Keep wrapping it the way around the trunk. When you're done, the twine should be completely wrapped and nowhere less than 6 inches apart at the ball's widest spot.

4. Tie and relocate

Tie the end of the twine to one of the vertical twine using a rolling hitch knot (One-armed-artist.com). Only now is it safe to relocate the tree. You don't want the root ball to fall apart during its journey as you cut it with wood chips and water it thoroughly and regularly—about every other day in warm weather.

fabric—and spreading gravel back over it, you'd still end up with a crop of weeds. So you might as well keep killing the weeds with her hands.

I don't know when local you're using, but I've had good luck with Kentucky 81, a systemic herbicide that kills the leaves as well as the roots. Follow the directions on the label closely. There's no point in using this stuff more than you have to. If you prefer to use an organic weed killer such as vinegar, you'll probably have to put more effort into follow-up treatments. In either case, spraying will be a regular maintenance task because a new batch of seeds will land on the drive every time the wind blows in a hard westerly. And that means you'll soon have another crop of weeds.

FIX FOR FLOOR SQUARES

On the second floor of our house, the plywood subfloor under the wall to wall carpeting squeaks whenever we walk out. Is there any way to make it quiet?

—SANDRA@PATTYFORECO.COM

Tony Silva replies: Your floor is squeaking because the plywood subfloor no longer rests on the joists in some places. Every time you step on a loose spot, the plywood ribs against it popped out, making a squeak. This way to fix it is to turn the plywood back in the joists.

The easiest way to do that is to remove the carpet, stand on the loose, squeaking plywood, and drive 15-in.-long self-tapping screws into the joists. The old heads will flip the joist's location. But this approach may be easier only if you're planning to replace the carpeting.

If the carpet is staying in place, a Squackooc No More kit will allow you to drive special metal rods across the floor through the carpet. The kit includes screws, a drill bit to cut the joists, and a special fixture to set the screws to the correct depth. Here's how to use it.

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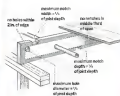
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to handle all the weight. Our house was built about 1875. What do you think?

—CONNIE OLSON, CHULASKA, WIS.

Tom Silva replies: Most likely you won't have a problem. The joists in houses that age and newer should be plenty strong enough to bear the weight of the tub, even when filled with water. However, it's possible that water can cut through the middle of a joint or two to start leaking, or that drilled lag bolts or run drain pipes, or made notches for supply pipes. Or perhaps a permanent leak has weakened the joists. A sagging, soft, or loose floor, or a cracked, water-soaked ceiling in the room below are good indications that something is wrong. But even if the floor seems solid, play it safe and investigate the situation before you lag that tub up there. Unless you're gutting the bathroom, it's usually easier to make some exploratory cuts in the ceiling of the room below.

If you do find discs, pipes, holes, or notches, don't be alarmed. Some cuts are okay, as long as they aren't too big or in the wrong spots. The illustrations above show exactly what's allowed under the building code and what's not. If the cuts do violate the code, call in a contractor to fix the problems before you proceed with your remodel.

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Quikrete products are sold by many home improvement stores. Quikrete products are sold by many home improvement stores. Quikrete products are sold by many home improvement stores.

WHAT PRODUCT WHEN

Cedar or Fibre-cement siding?



I'd like to replace my garage siding with either cedar or cement clapboards. What are the differences between the two?

—JASON SAUTER, PASADENA, MD.

Tom Silva replies: I grew up working with western red cedar siding, so I'm partial to the way it looks, as light-colored, the way it cuts so easily, and its aroma. Fibre-cement siding isn't quite as friendly to install—it's heavy, dusty, and requires special cutting tools—but once painted it doesn't look all that different from painted wood. The big difference is upkeep. Fibre-cement doesn't decay and goes longer between repainting. Here are some other things to keep in mind as you weigh your options.

CEDAR	FIBRE CEMENT
PROS	PROS
> Can be stained or painted.	> Costs about 25 percent less.
> Each piece is unique.	> Durable up to 50 years warranty.
> Low carbon footprint.	> Uniform: no knots or checks.
	> Doesn't decay.
CONS	CONS
> No product water only.	> Cement must be painted.
> Needs frequent painting.	> High-moisture contact increases warren footprint.
> Quality varies: best boards come from old-growth trees.	> Grains can look embossed.



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Imagine this home on your own land
Prospect Hill

4 Bedrooms, 3.5 Bath
Total Living Area: 2,292 Square Feet



This 4-bedroom, light filled farmhouse boasts a vaulted great room with exposed beams, a spacious first-floor master suite, dramatic main kitchen, bonus room over the garage for future expansion and dock off the dining room for outdoor entertaining.

Like each of the first four homes in the Bensonwood The Old House Collection, it's a whole-house package—precision built in a controlled environment then shipped in components to your site and expertly assembled by Bensonwood's artisan builders. Surprisingly affordable, these mixing, well supported, energy-efficient homes are customizable with three exterior trim themes and optional packages for alternate energy sources, radiant heating, and other upgrades. And for the inner builder in you, Do-It-Yourselfer options are also available.

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Norm's tricks of the trade



The joint tape on our textured ceilings seems to be coming loose in a few areas. How can I make a repair that blends in?

—ROGER BRAYER GREENVILLE, TN

A While ceiling was in production (2010) I have tested for adhesion. If there is any loose this is due to a pro who has the proper safety equipment. Otherwise, you can fix it yourself. While there are various caulked products that spray on a texture, they can be hard to control and their adhesion can actually rip the paper out with joint compound and paper—in lightweight texture that resembles coarse sand—some people in the past have used a brush to apply the joint compound. This is a good idea, but it's not the best. You need the kind of people in the past who used a brush to apply the joint compound. You need the kind of people in the past who used a brush to apply the joint compound. You need the kind of people in the past who used a brush to apply the joint compound.



1. Cut away the loose tape—don't remove any more of it than necessary. Then scrape off the underlying joint compound with a stiff putty knife and be careful not to damage the drywall's paper surface. Sweep off the dust.
2. Lightly dampen the tape with water and butter if such as possible joint compound. Keep compound and water in a bucket. Using a trowel, apply the compound over the tape and feather it into the surrounding ceiling area to avoid forming a visible line. Then press in a new piece of fiberglass mesh tape and cover it with a light layer of compound.
3. The next day brush the dry compound with a stiff brush. When the primer dries, apply another coat of compound and sand the joints into the wet surface with a fine-grit sandpaper. Then press in a new piece of fiberglass mesh tape and cover it with a light layer of compound.

Q I'm planning to build a fence out of boards about a foot longer than the height I want. Is there a quick way to cut them all down to size?

—CHERRY LARSEN, SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

A Make this marking guide to speed and make accurate than pulling out a tape measure for every cut. The same device can be used for marking repetitive cuts in decking, siding, and stairs.

1. Place your marking guide between the end of a full-length fence board and mark the length you want the fence board to be. Hold a piece of fence board against the full-length board so that one end is up with the mark, as shown.
2. Hook the scripper over the marked fence board and use the adjustable scripper guide to edge the fence board's end with the help of the guide, as shown.



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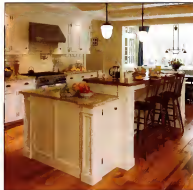
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Dear This Old House,
Please help me and my
sister Kelly save this
beautiful Greek Revival
home in our area.

Michigan: It's been our family since 1885 when our great-great-great-grandfather bought and started growing corn and wheat on the surrounding farmland. The house was handed down from great-grandfather and/or father took over in 1989. He spent the next 20 years working on it until early in the passed away last year. The farmhouse and its seven acres were left to us. But since we both live out of town, neither of us can find the work our father started. However we loved the place we do not like it as a house, that someone will buy the land and either restore it or we would like someone who will share this house as much as we do.

There is some extraordinary craftsmanship displayed in carved maple pocket doors, awesomely and built-in cabinetry. There is also wood-burning stove, antique light fixtures, and plaster ceiling medallions. Dated cedar shingle roof and painted the exterior.

But in 1935, the house still has a strong foundation but needs new wiring, plumbing, and a ton of plaster work. My grandmother, who spent some of her childhood there, drives by the farm every time she visits the family cemetery. It would break her heart to see the place torn down. Our hearts, too.

Sincerely yours,
Wally Golden

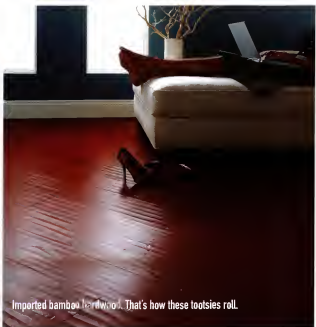


2. The property bears a Michigan Colonial Farm plaque given to farms that have remained in the same family for 100 years.
3. The owners and their extended family gathered last year for a livestock to their father.
4. The young boy in this 1949 photo is the owner's great grandfather.
5. The 3,250 square foot house has many of its original windows, arched doorways, and doors with lead glass over the panels.

Got a house? If you know of a dilapidated structure that should be saved and is for sale, write to The Old House, 125 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10019 or sendphotos@earthlink.net



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